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# FRANK READE ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE

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# Frank Reade on Government Service.

Stirring Adventures and Brave Deeds Beneath the Sea.

CHAPTER 1.

**Frank Reade Tackles a Thief and Receives an Offer from the Government.—Off on a Perilous Underwater Voyage.**

"WELL," said Frank Reade, with a long-drawn breath, "that's a cool robbery, hang me if it isn't! The fellow is no more my father's private secretary than I am. I'll follow him and discover what he's up to, if possible."

The scene was the post-office at Readestown, where dwelt the famous Reade family, whose wonderful inventions were known the wide world over.

Frank Reade junior, who was almost as famous an inventor as his father, had strolled into the post-office to see if there were any letters by the afternoon mail. There was only one person besides himself in the post-office, and the young inventor particularly noticed that he was a stranger.

He was of about twenty-five, neatly dressed, and had a dark-complexioned face, a black moustache, and eyes and hair of the same colour. Frank stood close behind him, and to his amazement he heard the stranger say to the post-office clerk:

"Have you any letters here for the Reade family, sir?"

"Yes," replied the clerk. "One—a Government envelope, too."

"Then please hand it to me."

"What for? You are a stranger to me, sir."

"That may be; but I am Mr. Reade's new private secretary."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! You see, either Barney O'Shea or Pomp, the negro, generally calls here for the mail, and, as I did not know that Mr. Reade had taken on a new secretary, I naturally hesitated about delivering you the letter."

"Oh, no offence, my friend," returned the stranger, smiling affably.

"Then here is the letter, sir," said the clerk, and he handed out a long envelope.

The stranger eagerly seized it, thrust it in his pocket, and walked away.

Then had Frank Reade junior muttered the words which open our story, and started out to follow the stranger. The man paid no attention to Frank, but deliberately and coolly walked to the railway-station, entered the waiting-room, and sat down near an open window to wait for a train. Presently he was joined by another man—a veritable giant in stature.

Thinking that no one but his companion was looking the dark stranger drew the stolen letter from his pocket, and said, just loud enough for Frank to overhear:

"Yes, it is from the secretary of the navy. Fortune favours me, Tom Krook. I knew it was coming to the Reades, thereby taking the contract from me. How fortunate I have a good friend in the secretary's office! Now I can represent myself as Frank Reade junior, to whom it is addressed, and accept the work from my residence in Chicago, making the secretary think I am living there for a while. The contract once in my hands, and the secret of this sunken ship in my possession, I can fit out my vessel, secure the valuables, and if what I find is worth more than the Government's reward for the work I will keep it."

The truth of the matter quickly dawned upon Frank's mind.

"The Government has evidently made me an offer to recover some treasure, as it did when I fitted out the 'Marvel,'" he muttered, "and this chap was after the same contract. Failing to get it he has hit upon the scheme of purloining my letter to impersonate me, and is trying a desperate game to win at the sacrifice of my good name."

The dark-faced stranger then deliberately opened Frank's letter, and read it to the giant in a monotone which the young inventor had no trouble in hearing:

"DEAR SIR,—Having heard that you have invented sundry marvellous patents, and may, among your many other achievements, have produced a submarine vessel, diving-bell, or

other apparatus for descending in the ocean currents, I beg to call your attention to the following fact, upon which you may act if you so desire: In the year 18—— the frigate "North Star" sailed from the port of Rio de Janeiro in command of Captain John Bagley, carrying on board gold specie to the amount of 500,000 dollars, various documents of great value, and several books belonging to the Government.

"Attacked in the midst of a violent storm by a piratical vessel she finally sank, and but few of her crew escaped. The Government have now set aside 250,000 dollars, to be paid to the successful person or persons who will recover from the wreck of the sunken ship the forementioned specie and documents, and turn the same over to the naval department. If you deem it worth your while to accept the work, and can supply the necessary appliances to do it, I will furnish you with all information, maps, charts, etc. Expecting your reply, I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

"HARRISON HOLBROOK,  
"Sec. of the Navy."

Making some remark concerning the letter the giant went out near the ticket-office without noticing Frank. Walking to the door of the waiting-room the young inventor pushed it open and entered. The moment the stranger saw him he hastily concealed the stolen letter in his pocket; but Frank said, quietly:

"My name's Frank Reade, and I know all about the letter you have in your pocket belonging to me. Hand it over."

"Wha — wha — what?" stammered the amazed stranger.

"You heard what I said," replied Frank, firmly, "and if you refuse to obey me I will march you at the point of this pistol straight into gaol. You have your choice. Now, which shall it be—return the stolen letter or go to prison?"

The man glanced restlessly into Frank's steady eyes, then at the muzzle of the revolver, and his face turned pale.

"I didn't——" he commenced, when Frank interrupted him with:

"No lies—no excuses. I know all, I tell you. Your choice—quick!"

The man drew the letter from his pocket reluctantly, a ferocious scowl on his brow.

"Denial is useless. Here it is," said he, and Frank took the letter.

Just then a train came in, and the giant boarded it. Frank pointed at it significantly.

"There is your conveyance from Readestown; take it as your friend did and go! If I catch you or him lurking round here again woe betide you!"

Slinking out on to the platform the rascal jumped into a compartment just as the train was moving away, and, shaking his clenched fist at the young inventor, hissed, spitefully:

"You shall dearly repent forestalling me on that job. We shall meet again. When we do, beware! Rufus Prince never forgets nor forgives an injury!"

The next moment the train was gone.

As Frank was entering his father's house a few minutes later he heard a terrible crash coming down the stairs, and just had time to dart aside, when a huge dark body reached the last step of the flight, and there sounded a groan and:

"I'se a dead niggah!" in the voice of Frank Reade's negro servant, Pomp.

"Faith!" came the tones of Barney, the Irish servant, from the head of the stairs, accompanied by an exultant chuckle, "that's gittin' avin wid yer fer givin' me ink ter dhrink in a whisky flask!"

"Yo' white trash! Trip up dis chile ag'in an' I done break my neck de nex' time, fo' suah! Come down yere only dis one minnit, do, an' I done lick de stuffin' out ob yo', Barney O'Shea!"

As Pomp vented this invitation he rose, shook himself, and, hearing a derisive laugh from Barney, he was about to rush up the stairs, when Frank stopped him.

"Pomp, stop this nonsense!" he cried.

"Oh, Marse Frank, dat you, sah? Hi, dar, yo' Barney!"

"Come down here, Barney!" cried Frank. "I've had enough of this fooling for the present. I've some grand news for you."

"Sor!" exclaimed that individual, cautiously descending the stairs.

"I am off on a new enterprise for money and adventure."

Both the darkie and the Irishman at once looked interested.

"Golly, sah! anudder trip to de moon dis time," asked Pomp, "scrapin' de clouds, steamin' ober de prairies, or what?"

"Neither of you could guess. This time I am going to take a trip under the ocean among the mermaids and sponges."

"What! In yo' new invention, sah?" gasped Pomp.

"Yes, indeed. You both have seen me at work on the 'Ghost,' and know how to operate it in every detail. I suddenly find that I can put it to practical use, and if I do——"

"We go wid yo', for snah!" said Pomp, enthusiastically. "Eh, Barney?"

"Faix! an' it's doyin' Oi be ter take a thrip in that sthrange bit av a boat down among ther fishes an' pollywogs," said Barney.

"Then run out to the shop while I go in and speak to father about the matter," said Frank, "and we will soon have the entire matter settled if anything is to be done."

A little later Frank was piloting his father out to the workshop, wherein Pomp and Barney were already installed. Then the older Reade beheld a singular object.

It was a cigar-shaped vessel, seventy-five feet long, sharp at both ends, built

smoothly as glass of the finest Bessemer steel plates, entirely galvanised, and had a triple propeller and rudder at one end. Above there was a concave rise of the deck, in the midships section of which rose a circular pilot-house, built of the strongest steel framework, in which were set inch-thick plates of glass, through which some peculiar machinery could be seen. On the top of the wheel-house and at either end of this strange craft were fastened electric lamps capable of immense power, while abaft of the wheel-house was a trap-door in the concave rise of the deck.

"I will explain its construction," said Frank to his parent. "It is very simple. The midships section holds the machinery for operating the screws, and all needful accommodation for the crew; the obtuse cone of the bow and the rounded stern are employed for the double purpose of reservoirs of condensed air and regulators of equilibrium. Outside are hydraulic and pneumatic tubes for the discharge of water or air. When you descend through a trap-door inside you are in an air compartment, a series of which range along both sides from stem to stern. To sink the vessel pumps compress the air from one chamber to another, and as soon as this is started a trap is opened to let in the water. The gravity of the compressed air is overcome by the weight of the water, and the boat readily sinks, its depth being regulated at will. It is simply the principle of ballooning applied to the sea instead of the atmosphere.

"Compressed air gets hot, but can be cooled, and our breathing throws off carbonic acid, which must be disposed of. Six pounds of quicklime in a bucket, with a small portion of water, and a bellows having the sprinkler of a watering-pot fixed on the nozzle, blown into the alkaline solution, purifies the air. If you will enter the boat with me I can better explain everything."

When Mr. Reade finally left the "Ghost" he openly declared that the youth had eclipsed all their former inventions by this one, and said that after a trial of the invention, if it proved successful, he wouldn't hesitate to permit Frank to accept the Government contract.

The trial was made, and the "Ghost" proved all that was claimed for it. Then, after a further correspondence with the Government, Frank was ready for his trip.

The submarine was launched in due course, and Frank Reade junior, Barney, and Pomp started off on a strange voyage, destined to be fraught with every conceivable peril and adventure.

The strange vessel sped through the water upon the surface with amazing velocity, surprising everybody on passing vessels, and as they were entering the Gulf of Mexico a schooner was passed, upon the deck of which stood a dark-complexioned young man.

"Rufus Prince," muttered Frank, as he steered the "Ghost" on her voyage. "He is going the same way as I am. Can it be possible he has located the sunken ship, and is going to fight against me in an effort to regain that gold and those papers?"

And something told him that Prince had indeed done all this, and was going to prove a sharp thorn in his side during the days to follow.

## CHAPTER 2,

### An Enemy in Pursuit.—Wrecked on a Wreck. —An Adventure on the Ocean's Bed.

THREE days later the "Ghost," having left the schooner some distance astern, ploughed her way through the Gulf of Mexico, and was off the eastern coast-line of South America.

The speed of the peculiar boat was marvellous, the machinery worked wonderfully well. The three adventurers sat in the pilot-house, and while Pomp held the wheel, Frank spread out a chart upon a small oval table and closely studied it.

The paper showed the spot in which the ill-fated "North Star" had gone down, a rough draught, made by one of the crew, showing the spot to have been about two miles from the shore of Guiana.

There was a small island within five hundred yards of the spot, and a diagram accompanying the chart, giving a vertical skeleton section of soundings made by the Government survey of the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean from Yucatan, coast of Mexico, to Senegal in Africa.

"This looks serious," said Frank to Barney, after he had studied the plan for a while, "for we could never descend into such a depth with the 'Ghost.'"

"Shure, an' Oi don't see whoy not, sor," said Barney.

"Then I will explain the matter to you as best I can. The pressure of water down below is just eight and a half pounds to the square inch at every twenty-five. At one hundred and fifty feet down, a man, according to the rate, would have just sixty-five and one-quarter pounds pressure equally distributed all over his body to a square inch. Six miles below the surface, or at a depth of thirty-two thousand feet, a human body would be subject to a pressure of nearly forty thousand pounds."

"Sabe us!" gasped Pomp.

"Just think," went on Frank, "at thirty-two thousand feet down, a man would bear ninety million pounds, and if he came up, his body would be flattened as if squeezed through the plates of a hydraulic machine."

"Howly Pether!" gasped Barney. "We can't go down, be jabers!"

"We can go down two hundred feet," said

Frank, with a smile, "for my inventions insure perfect safety at that depth to anyone. I have overcome the obstacle, so that you could not only walk about on the bottom in perfect security at such a depth, but in one of my armour suits you could defy the strong tides. Now, this ship being sunk so close to the island, which is shown here as having a gradually shelving bank, must not rest in such very deep water, after all, yet it is so deep that the Government's divers failed to reach or find it. The principle I have planned out is taken from the resistance a whale's body offers in going down great depths, and I have so constructed my diving-suits and this submarine boat as to act with a strength of resistance equal to that of the whale."

The young inventor went on to explain many other things to Barney and Pomp, and this gave them such confidence in the "Ghost" and all her appliances, that they both declared that they were not afraid to descend to the middle of the Atlantic in her with Frank.

As yet they had made no descent beneath the surface of the sea, excepting to try the different levers arranged on the board in the pilot-house. Their arrangement was so very simple that anyone could work them.

The "Ghost," since the day previous, had been going along at a slow rate of speed, owing to a heavy chop on the sea, and a gale that came from the north-eastward.

It was probably owing to this that the beginning of their troubles began, for the storm carried Rufus Prince's schooner along with it at fully fifteen knots an hour, and the vessel was steadily overhauling the "Ghost."

The first intimation they had of the approach of their enemies was a sudden report within a mile astern, and a heavy shot came rushing over the crests of the waves alongside the "Ghost."

"By Jingo!" exclaimed Frank, "here comes Rufus Prince on his schooner, the 'Sea Fox.'"

As he spoke there came another puff of smoke from the deck of the schooner, and this time a shot flew over the "Ghost" and dropped into the sea.

"This is getting dangerous," said Frank, uneasily, "and unless we do something to stop it he will destroy us."

"Den why fo' yo' doan' sink de ship?" asked Pomp.

"I shall. Stand ready, boys. Here she goes. Once under the sea, his guns cannot reach us very well."

He moved a lever, setting the machinery in motion, and as the water filled the compartments the "Ghost" sank under the sea with them.

Down, down, down she went to a distance of fifty feet, when Frank seized one of the wheels, gave it a turn, shut off the influx

of water into the chambers, pumped some out, and brought his boat to a stationary depth. There it darted through the brine like a fish, maintaining its depth by the way in which he ballasted it with water.

"There!" he exclaimed. "Now for the lights. Lever G, I believe."

He turned the little wheel, and a blinding glare of light shot up in and all around the "Ghost," making them blink. The sea around them, in a radius of one hundred feet, was illuminated as brilliantly as if the sun were shining.

Fishes of all sizes and kinds swam hither and thither, attracted by the startling glow; strange vegetation drifted by, and gaping monsters, unseen and unheard of on the surface, swam all around the "Ghost," many of them of such enormous size and strength that they could have smashed the glass to pieces.

"I think I'll go down farther," said Frank, as he grasped lever E, "and Pomp can put on a suit of armour and go out on the bottom for a stroll——"

"No, no!" interposed Pomp, hurriedly. "Bettah leabe dat till we've reached de sunken vessel, sah."

"Then be ther poiper, we're there now!" interposed Barney.

He grasped Frank's arm with a convulsive clutch with one hand, and with the other he pointed ahead of the flying vessel at a mass of ship's rigging. It loomed up in the depths like some grim spectre, and ere Frank could stop the "Ghost," she plunged her pointed bow straight into the rigging with a shock that made her quiver from stem to stern.

The three adventurers were flung down upon the floor. Frank bounded to his feet, and grasping lever A, he stopped the machinery. Had he been an instant later the propeller blades would have been smashed to pieces by their own revolutions.

"Faix, it's ther wreck av a ship we've shtruck," said Barney, rising.

"Dis chile tort de end ob de worl' come, fo' suah!" Pomp spluttered, as he, too, scrambled to an upright position.

"We are between the fore and mainmasts of a sunken ship," said Frank, as he peered out of the window in front. "And see, our bow is jammed under the fore mainsail yard. The deck of the vessel lies just below us a short distance, so the bottom can hardly be more than fifty feet further down."

"Can dis be de 'Norf Stah,' Marse Frank?"

"No, it can't be. It looks like a big vessel, though."

"An' how be ye a-going ter get out av this?" asked Barney.

"We must descend to get under this yard-arm."

They all took a prolonged view of the vessel beneath them, and as the young in-

ventor eyed the ropes on the ship, he saw that most of them had a sodden look, much as if they were rotten from water soaking.

"It is an old wreck," he said. "All the standing rigging is either rotten or gone. I'd like to go on board of that vessel and have a look in her cabin."

"Den go down, Marse Frank," advised Pomp, who had regained courage since he saw that the bottom was so near.

Frank thereupon pumped more water into the side compartments, and the "Ghost" went down at an oblique angle, and landed on a formation of coral beside the ship with a gentle shock, where it remained perfectly stationary.

"Why!" exclaimed the young inventor, excitedly; "see there—the name! She is the 'Silver Queen'—lost last year by springing a leak. She carried a cargo of merchandise from San Francisco for New York."

"De hull crew escape?" asked Pomp.

"Only two men were saved from one of the quarter-boats, in which they had been adrift a week without food or water. They claimed that the owners, Prince and Co., paid the captain to scuttle her, in order to gain the insurance. But as the underwriters could not glean any information beyond that, they are litigating with the owners yet about payment. Perhaps if we go on board we may be able to discover the truth of the matter. The senior member of the firm is the father of Rufus Prince—our enemy."

"I reckon dat I stop heah," said Pomp, uneasily.

"Well," said Frank, "I prefer to have someone to stay on the 'Ghost,' as there is no telling what may happen if we left her unguarded for any length of time."

"Faith, an' it's meself as is dyin' ter set fut on ther bottom av the say," said Barney, "so Oi'll go wid yer, shure."

"Then get two suits out of that locker, Barney, and you, Pomp, in the meantime, can go to the galley and get a good supper for us, as our first meal under the sea."

Barney brought out two divers' suits, and Frank and he donned them. The bodies and limbs were made of rubber, and the helmets of copper, with glass apertures in front.

There were knapsack attachments, being reservoirs of compressed air, with an ingenious mechanical contrivance by which breathing was made perfectly natural, and leaden weights for the soles of their feet.

In the breastplate of each suit was an electric light of great power, and their weapons consisted of waterproof cartridges in queer revolvers, capable of firing ten shots by dynamite, and knives with the blades in the handles, which could be sprung out by touching a trigger in the haft, as a swift blow under water was an utter impossibility.

As soon as both were ready they went through a trap-door in the pilot-house floor

down into the hold, thence through another trap into a compartment, out of which the air was expelled, and then through another door in the side of the "Ghost" into the sea.

Water filled the chamber as they emerged, and they found the bottom to be soft, sandy, and covered with strange vegetation. A code of talking-signals had been prearranged. It was no trouble for them to move through the water, and required but little exertion to board the wreck. They crossed the deck, and finding the door of the cabin closed they opened it and passed in, and down the companion-way stairs.

A terrible sight met their view. A number of men must have been in the cabin when the vessel went down, for all about, in various attitudes, were scattered white skeletons.

As Frank and Barney stood contemplating the horrible sight they suddenly heard a frightful, rushing sound in the cabin doorway, and glanced askance at each other. It seemed for an instant as if the bottom of the sea was in a frightful state of commotion. Filled with alarm Frank hurried towards the stairs, and going up to the top he glanced out at the door.

The electric light gleaming from his breast shot out across the deck, and showed him a mighty dark object coming towards the wreck. It was so enormous that at first he imagined it must be some submarine mountain falling over, as if about to engulf the stranded vessel. A second glance, and he saw another great object coming on behind. Then the truth dawned upon him.

"It is a whale being pursued by a sword-fish," he muttered, "and they are engaged in a fight."

He saw the great sword-fish dash at its natural foe, and to escape the long, blade-like snout of its enemy the whale suddenly sank lower, darted forward, and, striking the mizzen and main masts of the ship with its colossal body, it snapped them off like reeds.

At the same juncture the sword-fish made a vicious leap at the whale; but as the leviathan sank the sword-fish dashed over its back with wonderful speed, and came darting straight towards Frank.

The shock of the whale striking the masts flung Frank over backward, and, as he went tumbling down the stairs, the sword-fish came whizzing through the door. The young inventor got upon his feet and saw that the sword-fish had possession of the cabin, while Barney, in terror, was trying to get into a locker out of the way.

The whale no doubt had passed over the ship and made a hasty escape.

The vicious eyes of the angry sword-fish were turned towards Frank, and it seemed as if the sight of the youth increased its rage, for it made a savage dart towards him, its sword pointed straight at his body.

"Once that point penetrates this suit," muttered the youth, as he kept a steady glance fixed upon the fish, "it will tear open the rubber, let in the water, and I shall be done for in a minute."

On came the fish with a lunge, and in an instant later it was within a yard of Frank's body. Down dropped the youth on his knees, and the fish once more dashed over his head; its sword-point was plunged into the wood of the bulkhead, and so savage was the blow that the point became embedded.

The fish was held fast, unable to withdraw the sword.

"I've got you now!" muttered Frank.

He drew out one of his knives, pressed the haft to the body of the fish, touched the trigger, the blade flew out and pierced the body of the fish.

With a convulsive throe it dashed its huge body to one side, struck Frank a blow that knocked him down, and, breaking off the sword from its snout, it began wildly swimming round the cabin.

Its blood crimsoned the water, and Frank recovered himself and crept over towards the locker in which Barney had ensconced himself out of harm's way. By signals like deaf and dumb motions they spoke to each other.

"We shall perish if we remain in here," said Frank. "The blood of the sword-fish will draw——"

"Oh! what is that?"

Barney interrupted Frank, and pointed at the cabin door, through which several huge bodies glided. One glance was enough for Frank, and a shudder passed over him as he motioned to Barney these words:

"Sharks! They are attracted by the sword-fish's blood, as I feared!"

Seeing that certain death awaited them if they remained in the cabin Frank beckoned to Barney and made a dash for a door he saw in the bulkhead forward.

The Irishman followed him; but before they reached the door the three sharks had seen them and plunged after the fleeing pair. It seemed for an instant as if they must perish; but just as the sharks turned over upon their backs to snap at them they dashed through the door and forced it partly to.

"Safe!" muttered Frank; but as he spoke he fell down through space, and Barney came falling after him. They were tumbling into the hold of the vessel, but did not suffer any injury from it, and were safe from the sharks.

All around them now were heaps of the ship's cargo, in boxes, bales, casks, cases, and packages. They made their way over the stacks of lost valuables from the stern of the vessel towards the forward hatchway. It was open, and myriads of small fishes swam in and out, while nearly everything was covered with a deposit of slimy mud; a thick coating of barnacles clung to the walls of the

hull; in every nook and corner were to be seen great black sea-spiders, and in a dark corner lurked a horrible cuttle-fish.

It was a den of horrors. But the worst sight of all was yet to be seen. Frank had gone on in advance of his companion, and as he arrived beneath the open hatchway he stumbled over a heavy box, and glancing down he saw that the box partially covered the remains of a man, and, stooping closer over the skeleton, he saw that something was clutched in the outstretched hand. It was a rusty auger. Frank touched Barney and pointed at it. Then he bent over, and scraping aside the oozing mud carpeting the bottom planks he showed Barney several large holes which had been bored in the garboards of the ship close to the keel.

"Proof," he thought, "that this ship was scuttled, and these bones belong to the guilty captain. The box probably fell upon him while he was engaged at his nefarious work, pinioned him there, and dragged him to the bottom with the ill-fated ship. He got his deserts."

They had proved beyond question that the ship was lost in an illegal way, and taking the auger, upon the handle of which there was a brass plate inscribed with the name "Silver Queen" as evidence, Frank went up a ladder towards the deck in company with his old friend.

The sharks were probably in the cabin yet, so they hastily left the vessel and went towards the "Ghost."

They boarded her without further adventure, and, having had enough of under-water excitement for the time being, Frank sent the submarine to the surface. Up went the "Ghost" very rapidly, and within a few minutes it shot out of the depths up on the surface of the sea once more in the bright moonlight, just three hours after having made its first submarine descent.

The windows were open, fresh air came in, reviving the three adventurers, and away sped the "Ghost" to the southward, the machinery going at full speed.

They had a hearty supper, and afterwards kept a sharp lookout for Oyapok Island, the tiny bit of land near which the "North Star" went down, carrying with it the Government valuables.

Several hours later a vessel was sighted ahead. They ran for it, but upon a closer approach they saw that lying at anchor was the "Sea Fox," and that a short distance behind it lay the island they sought.

"By jingo!" said Frank, grimly, "it is Rufus Prince's boat, and he has found the mapped spot where the 'North Star' sank, and has anchored on the ground ahead of us. He must have been furnished with duplicates of the papers and maps sent to me. He will fight us to the very death before he will let us secure the valuables on the sunken vessel."



## CHAPTER 3.

Frank Plays a Neat Trick on his Enemies.—  
The "North Star" at Last.—Touch and Go  
with Death.

THE "Ghost" dashed past the "Sea Fox," and passing round the island she ran into a small cove, where she came to a stop. There she remained until the dawn of the following day, when Frank went ashore and strolled round the island. It was covered with tropical vegetation, was about a mile in diameter, perfectly circular in shape, and in the centre stood the ruins of an old stone house.

The "Sea Fox" lay at anchor half a mile in the offing at the northward, and Frank climbed upon a heap of rocks and gazed out towards the rising sun.

He could see all the actions of the men on the "Sea Fox," and noticed Rufus Prince standing up forward with the giant, Tom Krook, pointing towards the island. Frank brought a telescope to bear on the vessel, and he perceived several men standing round a couple of air-pumps, near which were diving-dresses, ladders, etc.

"They are preparing for a descent," he muttered, "and are calculating about the spot to go down. But I think I can easily frustrate any such intention for a while."

He was about to descend from the rocks, when he saw Prince looking at him through marine glasses. The next moment he knew by the actions of the man that he had been recognised. And in another instant a rifle was discharged at him. The shot missed him, however, and he hastened down to the ground and ran for the cove where the "Ghost" lay. Boarding the submarine he hastily explained what had happened, and then cried:

"Get me a long chain with a hook on the end of it, and one of those fine steel saws out of the tool-chest. I will get the best of them yet!"

Pomp hurried off to obey this order.

"Whut kin Oi do?" asked Barney.

"Run into the pilot-house and prepare the 'Ghost' for a descent of about twenty feet under water. You understand the gauge enough to know when that depth is reached."

Barney did so, and Frank went in and donned a diving-suit; but before he put on the helmet or closed the bull's-eye he took the chain Pomp brought out on deck. There he fastened one end to a strong ring-bolt near the stern, and coiled up the rest to the hooked end. He fastened the saw to his belt, and after the helmet was adjusted and the bull's-eye in front of it was closed he stationed himself outside on the deck, and motioned to Barney to start the "Ghost" off to the northward after they had passed out of the cove and sunk under water.

Wondering what he was up to Barney obeyed.

The "Ghost" glided out of the cove, and

at a motion from Frank water was pumped in, she sank, and away she went under water towards the "Sea Fox." Within a short time she came directly beneath the schooner, and at another signal from Frank she was stopped.

There she lay motionless beneath the enemy's planks, and the tide presently drifted her up to the anchor-cable.

Frank held her there, drew out his saw, and setting to work upon the cable he sawed it in two. He then bade Barney, by a signal, to raise the "Ghost" up under the schooner at the stern, and as the water was pumped out the steel boat rose beneath the "Sea Fox's" keel.

She had ranged back near the rudder-post of the schooner, and remained there while Frank fastened the hook in the end of the chain to a ring-bolt he found upon the rudder-post.

The "Ghost" was then started off to the south-eastward, and, the chain paying out and becoming taut, the "Ghost" began to tow the "Sea Fox" away. Frank then went through the trap in the oval raise of the deck behind the pilot-house, and, getting inside of the "Ghost" and taking his armour off, he laughed and said:

"There! we have him now and he cannot help himself, unless he wants to sacrifice more anchors. We can tow him far out to sea and unship his rudder. It is doubtful after that if he will be able to interfere with our work."

Both Barney and Pomp had to laugh.

"Dey soon know wha' de mattah is, dough," said Pomp, with a broad grin, "fo' dey done see yo', Marse Frank, an' 'spec' dat we'll get 'em by de tail."

"There is but one thing to be feared," remarked Frank.

"Faix! an' it's meself can't see what!" cried Barney.

"Why, they have heavy guns on board," said Frank, "and might fire a random shot that would hit us. We have a remedy, however, and that is to shorten our cable after a while. We can then haul the 'Ghost' close up under the stern of the vessel out of his reach and travel a little slower. A portion of the bow and possibly a part of the pilot-house might thus be exposed, though, and that would be dangerous, too."

"Begorra, we'd better rishk bein' shot at, thin!" said Barney, very soberly, "for we're a purty good way down out av raich o' thim, anyhow."

"Then lower the 'Ghost' until she is seventy-five feet down, and that will not only draw us back further towards the 'Sea Fox,' but will place us further out of danger in the depths," said Frank.

Down went the boat, and she necessarily was forced to forge back nearer to the schooner; but her speed continued unabated, and she rapidly carried the schooner along. Within half an hour after starting they heard

a faint, distant, muffled report, and saw a globular object dart down through the water in the glare of the electric lights far ahead of them.

"They know the truth now," said Frank, grimly, "and are dropping shot in the water in hopes of hitting us."

All day long they kept the "Sea Fox" in tow, carrying her far out to sea, and shot after shot was fired at random from the deck above down into the sea in hopes of hitting the "Ghost"; but none touched her.

Once an anchor went down with a run, and fathom after fathom of cable was played out; but the depth of water was too great for it to touch bottom, so it was hauled up again and the vessel went on.

When night fell upon the sea and Frank examined the log he had running out he calculated that he had towed the "Sea Fox" nearly two hundred miles from the island of Oyapok. He then resolved to unship her rudder and abandon her.

Accordingly the chain hawser was detached, and the "Ghost" went up to the rudder-post, where the saw was again brought into requisition upon the rudder swivels.

Within two minutes the work was done.

The rudder was rendered useless, and it would occupy at least a day to repair the damage, and perhaps two days to sail back to the island, which would give Frank at least two days' start of his enemy. He hoped in that time, if unmolested, to secure the money and papers from the wreck of the "North Star," and leave the "Sea Fox" hunting for what was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two days had passed by since the "Ghost" returned to the spot where the map designated the last resting-place of the "North Star," but during all that time, although Frank Reade's vessel had gone below the surface to find it, no trace could be discovered.

"This is the queerest thing I ever heard of," the young inventor said to his two companions, at the close of the second day, as the "Ghost" lay on the surface of the water near the island. "The map clearly states where she went down, and as she was built of oak timbers and good planking it does not seem reasonable to think she would have gone to pieces under the sea."

"Don't yer think it's moighty loikely that ther loikes av thim two sailors as wuz adhrift in ther boat moight a lied," said Barney, "so's ter lay their own hands on it, be schtat-in' it wor in wan place, whin it moight be in another? That would laid ther Government astray, shure, an' make it convanient for thim to retrurn some time an' secure ther threasuro for thimselves, Masther Frank."

"Such might have been the case; but the men are now dead, and if they had such a weighty secret they would not have carried it with them to the grave, I am sure."

Frank's reasoning seemed to be just.

"Let me see that map again," he said, at last. "We might have made some mistake about the location."

Pomp brought it out of the locker and spread it out on the table before Frank, who held a magnifying-glass over it.

"Ah! here it is! Let—me—see. It says: 'She went down on the eastern side of the island——' But hold on, boys! What is this I see?"

"What?" demanded Barney, as he and Pomp bent closer.

"The word 'northern' was erased and 'eastern' substituted!"

"Be ther harp av St. Patrick!"

"Look through this magnifying-glass and you will see it! There has been foul play here. Can't you see it? Acid removed the word 'northern,' and this glass will plainly show you that another hand besides the one which inscribed all the rest of the description wrote the word 'eastern' over it. This trick was played in the office of the secretary of the navy in order to deceive me and lead me astray long enough for Rufus Prince to secure the sunken treasure. You know he has a friend in the secretary's office, who must have supplied him with copies of my papers."

Frank was very angry over the trick which had been played upon him, and resolved on his return home to root out the traitor in the secretary's office and have him punished for his rascality.

Preparations were at once made for a descent into the depths once more, and just as the sun went down on the western horizon the "Ghost" glided through the water towards the spot where the "Sea Fox" had been anchored. Frank held the wheel, and was carefully measuring the distance, when he chanced to look up, and a cry of rage and mortification escaped his lips as he saw a vessel bearing down upon Oyapok Island from a short distance to the eastward.

"The 'Sea Fox'!" he exclaimed.

"Well, be ther powers av glory, if it isn't!" ejaculated Barney. "Bad cess to ther blayguards if they intherferes wid us undher ther wather, for shure an' we'd have them botheration on 'em from ther beginnin' wid arl ther modhern improvemints yez be's makin', Masther Frank."

"We ought to have some advantages," said Frank, "for while they have only the old style of diving outfit to help them, we can go down and stay there nearly a week if we like. Now, boys, is everything ready?"

"It is that, sor."

"An' de raskils, dey see us, sah!"

The discharge of a gun from the deck of the oncoming schooner apprised them that Pomp told the truth.

A heavy shot came flying towards them, but fell far short of its mark. The "Ghost" was then about at the spot where the "North

Star" should be, and was sunk obliquely. A reckoning was taken of the water's depth, but when they touched bottom it was found to be only a little over one hundred feet.

It therefore became evident that if the "North Star" had gone down in that water, had the sea not demolished her masts, the royal topmasts would have shown near the surface.

But they were gone, no doubt, as one heavy storm would have sufficed to smash them to pieces, and only the hulk could yet remain to tell the tale. The electric lights were started, and as the incandescent glow pierced the green ocean depths they saw numerous small reefs of coral lying around, wonderful forms of vegetation, and myriads of strange fishes and crawling things.

The "Ghost" was not allowed to touch the bottom, but went off describing a vast circle, covering a great area, and gradually wound in on it, narrowing the compass of its revolutions until at last they espied a ship's hulk. It was half-buried in a growth of coral and seaweed. The masts were gone, and she was heeled over on one side. The name remaining on the bows showed she was the "North Star."

"At last!" exclaimed Frank, joyously. "There she is now!"

He stopped the machinery, brought the "Ghost" to a pause close beside the wreck, and, donning his diving-suit, he left the boat in charge of Barney and Pomp, and went on board the "North Star."

In his eager haste he had not taken a weapon with him.

He bitterly regretted this the moment he had gone down into the captain's cabin, wherein the missing gold and papers were stowed, for as he stepped within the door an enormous octopus stretched out its two largest feelers, and ere he could escape from it he found himself drawn into a deadly embrace, from which it seemed no human power could save him.

A groan escaped the youth as he felt those powerful arms entwine themselves around his throat, and he knew with infinite horror that he was slowly but surely being strangled to death.

With mad desperation Frank turned himself round, and the vivid, blinding glare of the electric light flashing from the breast-plate of his armour struck the great, protruding eyes on the flat head of the octopus. For an instant it quivered all over, and as the light continued it began to retreat across the cabin. The suffocating clutch of its arms relaxed from around Frank's neck, and the boy then saw what frightened it.

"The light!" he gasped. "It is my salvation! I'll fix you!"

He seized the electric wires connecting the battery slung beneath his knapsack with the reflector in front, and unscrewing them,

thereby extinguishing the light, he brought a single point against the tentacles on each side of him. The fish received a frightful electric shock. There came one throb of its body, and just as Frank jumped back, released, it began to contort, twist, and wriggle about the floor much as if it was half-crazed. The boy replaced the screws, and as the light again flashed upon the writhing body he retreated from the cabin.

"That settles him!" muttered the young inventor. "He won't bother me again in a hurry. But, not to trust to luck, I'll go."

He hurried from the cabin, and boarding the submarine gave a brief recital of his adventures, and then ordered Barney to accompany him on another trip to the wreck.

Barney was soon ready, and they left the "Ghost" both well armed and boarded the ship again; but the devil-fish was gone. The electric shock Frank had given it proved to be quite enough for the terrible creature.

They entered the cabin and looked round. Not a sign of life was to be seen anywhere. The water had washed out everything, and a fine coating of white sand and mud covered the walls. It was an ordinary cabin with bunks at one side, the curtains of which had become water-soaked and rotten, the bedding was all gone, and the furniture had all been washed out. There was a small book-rack on the wall, a locker at one side, and in the corner stood a small safe.

"The papers are in that iron box," Frank muttered, "and are rolled up in a water-tight can. I shall have to turn burglar and blow open the door. The gold is in five boxes, stowed away in a hidden locker between the wainscoting and the hull."

He made his way over to the safe, and saw it was fastened with a combination-lock.

Had he been furnished with the numbers he would have had no trouble to get at the contents; but he was prepared with gun-cotton and dynamite for the emergency, besides tools adapted to making a hole in the iron plates.

He sent Barney back to the "Ghost" for these, and as the Irishman was gone quite a long time he ventured to the door to look out and see if he was coming, when to his surprise he beheld something dark come flying down through the water and become imbedded in the rocks beside the ship. A second glance showed him that it was a ship's anchor with a chain cable attached to it.

"The 'Sea Fox'!" he muttered, aghast. "They have not lost any time in dropping their anchor in the right spot. Rufus Prince knows we are down here now, and means to wrest this prize from me—if he can."

He watched the anchor cable a while, and presently saw the figure of a man dressed in a diver's suit descending close by.

The man carried an air-pipe and a life-line, and in his hand he clutched a short-handled

axe. He had no light, but the moment he reached the bottom he saw the glare from the lights on the "Ghost." Barney and Pomp were moving about within the pilot-house in his range of sight, and he stood looking at them without moving for fully a minute, Frank in turn intently watching him.

There are three barred glass windows in the headgear of a diver's helmet, the middle one round and the two side ones oval in form; and as Frank moved out on the deck the light from the lamp in his breast-plate gleamed in the side bull's-eye of the man's helmet.

He turned round like a flash, and saw Frank approaching him as swiftly as the twenty-pound weights on his feet would permit.

As a pound of coal only weighs about three ounces under water it can be inferred that the weights on Frank were not greatly felt, yet they were heavy enough to overcome the buoyancy of the air compressed in the knapsack on his back.

Upon seeing Frank the stranger pulled three times on the life-line, and those above on the "Sea Fox" paid out more air-pipe and life-line, and he advanced to meet Frank.

He must have been amazed to see the men in the "Ghost" suffering no inconvenience in being under the water, and still more to observe Frank going about without air-pipe or life-line. Noticing that the youth advanced towards him he lifted the axe he carried in a menacing manner.

Frank drew one of his dynamite pistols, aimed it at the blade of the axe, pulled the trigger, and there came a silent discharge and a violent recoil. The axe was knocked from the diver's hand. He was a plucky fellow, though, and drew a long-bladed knife from his belt and advanced further. Frank menaced him with the revolver again.

The man made a motion of scorn, and the youth saw that he was not afraid of the weapon, but wanted fair play. Replacing his revolver Frank drew a knife instead, and moved nearer to the stranger, who the next instant made a lunge at him.

The young inventor drew back, escaped the blow, shot out his arm, sprang the knife-blade from the handle, and, as it came in contact with the air-pipe and life-line attached to the diver, he gave them a slash and cut them in two.

At the same juncture he seized hold of the air-pipe below where he had cut it, and prevented the water rushing in. The diver realised what he had done, and made a convulsive movement, believing that his life was gone, and dropped his knife. Frank pointed at the "Ghost" and pushed him towards it.

"I'll make a prisoner of every man sent down, and scare them away," he thought.

He hustled the scared man to the "Ghost," out of which Barney had just emerged, got him inside just in time to save him from suffocation, and tore off his suit,

The man was nearly dead when they stripped him, but after little trouble he was revived, and found himself, bound hand and foot, lying on the floor. Frank had his helmet open, and said:

"You need not be surprised. You know who I am, and I will tell you that you are our prisoner on this boat. Now, tell me the truth. How came Rufus Prince to know where to get at this treasure?"

"Yer kin kill me," said the man, in dogged tones, "but I'll be blowed ef I'm a-goin' ter give my cap'en away!"

"Very well," said Frank. "All your crew can do will not be of any avail, for inside of twenty-four hours I shall have all the money and papers from the 'North Star' on board this vessel."

#### CHAPTER 4.

#### The Treasure Safe.—The Submarine Stolen.—Frank and Barney Captured.

LEAVING his prisoner under Pomp's watchful care, Frank and Barney left the "Ghost," after supplying themselves with utensils to blow open the safe in the "North Star," which Barney had been hunting for, occasioning his long delay. The severed air-pipe and life-line had been hauled up on the "Sea Fox," the crew of which, no doubt, imagined their diver had perished.

"They will imagine some deep-sea fish severed the lines," spelled Frank to his companion, in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet.

"And may send down another man to see," replied Barney.

"If they do, he will share his companion's fate."

"Hadn't I better remain on guard to see?"

"By all means. I can open the safe unaided."

Frank thereupon clambered upon the deck of the wreck with his companion, and, leaving Barney sitting on the stump of the foremast, he walked aft and entered the cabin.

Attacking the safe at the spots where he located the bolts with a drill he commenced to bore holes in the plates, in which he could insert his dynamite cartridges, to blow the door off and get at the contents. All Frank's tools were of the finest material and best make, and worked rapidly and well.

Within an hour he had four holes drilled through the iron plates, and, laying aside his tools, he inserted a dynamite cartridge of brass in each aperture. He then joined the four by a fine piece of insulated copper-wire, and attached a leading wire from the juncture at the four connections, unreeled it from a spool, and carried it on deck and over the side.

They had carried out a wire from within the "Ghost," which was connected with an electric battery, and to this Frank attached the wire running from the safe. He was

joined by Barney, who signified that nothing had happened, and they walked over to the "Ghost." There Frank climbed up on the deck, and tapped at one of the windows in the pilot-house, to attract Pomp's attention.

The darkie had been talking to the prisoner, who lay prone upon the floor, but, hearing Frank's signal, he jumped up and hurried over to the window.

"Is the battery all right?" gestured Frank.

"Yes," came Pomp's signal. "Are you ready?"

Frank nodded, and Pomp strode over to a small wooden table, on which were arranged a series of black rubber press-buttons. He bent over it, found the right one, and touched it. The electric circuit was made and the cartridges exploded.

A distant, dull, rumbling sound followed. The roof of the cabin was blown to fragments by the particles of iron flying up from the safe-door, and with a lot of debris and smoke a vast volume of great bubbles ascended towards the surface of the sea. The concussion killed hundreds of fish, and stirred up the mud so that for a while the water became thick and lost its former transparency.

When the mud settled, Frank looked over at the "North Star," but saw no change in her appearance, except the loss of the cabin roof. Then he touched Barney's arm and motioned:

"What has become of the anchor cable of the 'Sea Fox'?"

"I cut it with a saw while you were inside," replied Barney. "The anchor is sticking in the mud yet, but they've hauled up the chain cable, and the vessel must be drifting."

"Good enough. They will soon become disgusted with us, and may sail away, abandoning their object."

They returned to the "North Star" and entered the cabin side by side. The door and one of the sides, part of the top, and the lower edge of the safe had been blown to pieces. The apertures for books were filled with packages of the ship's papers, the pigeon-holes contained some small boxes belonging to the captain, and, upon opening the iron door in the upper left-hand corner, Frank saw a small conical tin box completely covered with rust.

"There it is! The Government papers!" he muttered.

He eagerly drew out the box, and, motioning to Barney to take the rest of the contents of the safe, he returned to the "Ghost."

Upon entering the pilot-house Frank got his helmet off and opened the tin box after a great deal of trouble. It contained as he expected, the valuable papers which the Government wanted. They were perfectly safe, slightly damp, but entirely uninjured.

Not to run any chances of losing them

again, unless he lost the "Ghost" or his own life, he went to a tiny safe in his own state-room abaft the pilot-house, opened it, locked the papers up in it, and then breathed a sigh of intense relief.

He was soon ready to return to the wreck. As he got upon the deck of the sunken ship again he was amazed to see four sinuous lines hanging down from the surface of the water and running into the cabin.

"Two divers!" he exclaimed. "These are the air-tubes and life-lines, and Barney must be in trouble in there."

He hurried across the deck to the broken cabin door and peered in.

A tragic scene met his view. Two strange divers, one short and the other a perfect giant, were hurrying towards Barney with axes in their hands, raised aloft. The Irishman had his back turned towards them, as he was kneeling upon the floor in front of the safe, extracting its contents.

For the space of a second it seemed as if Barney was doomed. But before the evil-mind could reach him, Frank seized upon the air-tubes attached to their armour, and, squeezing the hard indiarubber with all his might, he stopped their supply of air and brought them to a pause.

They turned round and glared at him, saw what the trouble was, and hastened towards him.

Just then Barney chanced to glance round over his shoulder, and, seeing what was transpiring, he rose to his feet. Frank retaining his hold upon the air-pipes gave four pulls. That signified to those upon the vessel, "Haul up diver."

And as the two men hurried towards Frank they were suddenly jerked up towards the surface, and disappeared in the dark waters.

Frank knew very well that the two divers would explain matters as soon as they reached the deck of the "Sea Fox," and would come down again as soon as possible.

In order to frustrate any intention on their part of gaining possession of the gold, he resolved to keep Barney on guard.

Having told the Irishman what to do, he hastily entered the cabin, and removing several portable boards from the wainscoting of the bulkhead he exposed an aperture much like a cupboard, in which stood five boxes of oak.

They stood piled on top of each other. Each box was about two cubic feet in size, and the seals of lead impressed in die-holes showed Frank that they were the treasure-boxes holding the 500,000 dollars in gold specie.

As solids in waters lose about one-fifth of their weight, when Frank attempted to move one of the boxes he found that it did not seem to be so heavy as he supposed it would be. In fact, he could carry it, with some exertion, and at once started for the "Ghost" with the box in his arms.

The young inventor worked with great speed, for he knew that the divers from the "Sea Fox" would soon return, and within a remarkably short space of time he had taken all of the five boxes from their hiding-place and transferred them to the hold of the "Ghost." During the progress of his work nothing was seen of his enemies.

The diver who lay upon the floor a prisoner glared balefully at them.

"I reckon if thar's enny gumption in Rufus Prince," growled he, in husky tones, "you chaps won't keep the gold long. We're all ter git our share o' it, an' will, too, even if yer hev got ther stuff down hyer at ther bottom o' ther sea yet."

"Oh," said Frank, sarcastically. "So you fellows have already been planning what you will do with it, even before the stuff is in your clutches. Well, I like your cheek!"

"Didn't we locate it first?"

"Yes—granted—after hiring a sneaking rascal at Washington to alter the plans which were furnished me by the secretary of the navy. But, luckily, I discovered the cheat."

"Oh, I didn't hev nuthin' ter do wi' that."

"I didn't accuse you. But you're in with Prince."

"No, I'm not. Let me whack up wi' you fellers, let's share an' share alike."

"I'll think the matter over."

"Better le' me jine yer, cap. I'm only wi' Rufus Prince, like ther rest, in hope o' getting my share."

"How many of you are there?"

"Fifteen, all told, sir."

"Got a complete outfit, haven't you?"

"Rufus Prince hes spent a fortune a-riggin' out his boat."

"Are all the men about of your way of thinking?"

"All but ther giant, Tom Krook. He's devoted heart and soul to Rufus Prince, and we foremast hands thinks as they hev a game ter divide ther gold atween 'em."

"I shouldn't wonder if such was their plot."

Frank questioned the man more closely, leaving him to half-expect that he might be enlisted on board the "Ghost." When he discovered all he wanted to know about the schooner and her crew he said, in different tones:

"Well, I'm not going to deceive yqu, Ben Bolt."

"Wot about?" growled the bearded sailor, a little surprised.

"My intentions. This money all goes back to the Government, to which it rightfully belongs, and no nonsense about it."

"Then gosh-blame yer figger-head, yer've been a-pumpin' infermation out o' me, an' a-cheatin' me all ther time?"

"Of course, you jackass! Couldn't you see through it?"

"Yer a mighty cute cove, Frank Reade,

you be," the diver exclaimed, bitterly, "but I'm a-warnin' yer as a set o' men like wampires an' sharks is in yer wake, an' afore yer kin say Jack Robinson they'll get the best o' yer."

"I am going to move the 'Ghost' a little way, Pomp," said Frank, turning to his sable friend, "and we will then pick up Barney from the ship and go up to the surface."

"Orright, sah!"

"Watch Ben Bolt like a bulldog. If he gets cranky, lock him up in No. 7 cabin."

Pomp nodded, and the captive scowled. Frank then seized the lever, and started the "Ghost" up from her resting-place and sent her ahead. Ben Bolt watched all he did with the keenest interest, and soon saw how the "Ghost" was managed.

Moreover, by listening to the conversation that passed between Pomp and Frank, he gleaned a great deal more. Having moved the "Ghost" over to the other side of the wreck, Frank brought it to a standstill, and leaving everything in readiness for an instant departure, he readjusted his helmet. Leaving the boat he started off after Barney. That individual sat on the deck of the "North Star" in a speculative mood, and as Frank drew near he arose, and hastening towards the young inventor he motioned:

"The two divers have come down again, and are in the wreck."

"Then come. We are ready to ascend to the surface," said Frank.

"Look!" rejoined Barney. "They are coming out."

"And have discovered that we have the gold."

The two divers, who were the same who had been down before, certainly had a ferocious aspect as they started towards Frank and Barney.

Seeing that a fierce, disastrous battle would follow a collision, and deeming it useless to fight, now that his object was obtained, Frank hurried Barney away towards the "Ghost."

But what was their dismay to see through the glass windows of the pilot-house that Ben Bolt had liberated himself of his bonds, had knocked Pomp down on the floor, was pointing one of Frank's revolvers at his head with one hand, and with the other was starting the machinery of the "Ghost." The two divers besetting them on one hand, and a chance of being abandoned at the bottom of the sea on the other hand, their position was one of extreme peril. They started ahead faster to reach the "Ghost," but ere they had taken a dozen paces, up it rose, and away it rushed from them, leaving the two unfortunates a prey to the most poignant feelings of intense anguish.

For a time Frank stood bewildered, and it was only when a nudge from Barney warned him to beware of the two divers that he re-

covered himself, and they both retreated out of range of their enemies, who could get no more life line or air-tubing, and had to stand threatening Frank like two chained dogs. Seeing that they were safe, Frank spelled with his fingers :

"We are abandoned under the sea, and before long the air in our knapsacks will become exhausted and leave us to strangle to death down here."

"Let us tackle those two divers and try to get up on the 'Sea Fox' on their life-lines," replied Barney.

"It is useless. They could master us with those axes."

"What can we do, then?"

"Release ourselves of our leaden soles and body weights. The air in the knapsacks will carry us to the surface, and we may be able then to swim to Oyapok Island, as it will be no effort to float on the water."

"But Rufus Prince might shoot at us."

"If the night is dark up above he will not see us."

"What's the matter with walking to the island?"

"The distance is short, Barney, but we do not know in which direction it lies. Instead, we might walk straight out to sea. Besides, the bottom presents many dangers, as you can see."

"All right; I'll do just as you do, Master Frank."

"Then let us get out of the sight of those two divers who are intently watching all our movements. They do not evidently know what jeopardy we are in. Extinguish your light. That will leave the entire water in darkness all around, so that they cannot see us."

Barney did as he was ordered, and as soon as the electric lights were turned off the most intense darkness prevailed. They knew that the two divers would not remain under water much longer than to explore the sunken ship again by the aid of an electric light, which might be lowered to them from the schooner at any instant.

Frank and Barney kept hold of each other, and loosening one sole apiece from their boots they ascended a short distance, then, loosening the others, they mounted higher.

Their back weights were next cast off, one by one, and as they were lifted higher and higher their sense of breathing became easier, the circulation of their blood freer, and the movements of their digestive organs not so torpid.

A sudden sharp pain in the ears assailed them, such as divers feel upon first going down, their vision became less dull, and their hearts beat more normally.

By the time the breast weights were all abandoned they were floating side by side on the surface of the sea. They then turned the thumb-screw valves to hold the air in the

reservoir, which would now act for them as life-preservers, and then opened the front bull's-eyes in their helmets, and breathed the fresh air blowing over the water. A glance round showed them the "Sea Fox" lying up in the wind over the spot where the two divers went down. It was a clear, moonlit night. In the distance they could see the crown of green foliage on Oyapok Island rising darkly against the horizon, while in every other direction stretched the vast waste of the Atlantic's broad expanse of glittering waters.

"Safe so far, Barney!" exclaimed Frank, as they paddled along side by side. "But no sign of the 'Ghost.'"

"May the blessid Vargin pectect poor Pomp!" replied Barney.

"I am afraid his doom is sealed!"

"Och, murdher! don't say that, Masther Frank!"

"It seems to stand to reason," replied the young inventor, in sad tones. "Ben Bolt has got possession of the boat, and heard and saw enough to know how to work it. At the last moment we saw him he was threatening Pomp's life with a revolver, and the darkie may now be dead."

Not knowing what else to do they resolved to swim for Oyapok Island; but even in this they were doomed to disappointment.

For just as they started off a blazing search-light suddenly flashed out over the rolling sea from the bridge of the "Sea Fox."

The vivid rays of the light fell upon them, and as it was not removed they knew that they were seen.

A quarter-boat was lowered at the side of the "Sea Fox," they saw several men get in, the davit lines were cast off, and the boat darted towards them.

"They have seen us!" said Frank. "Now, Barney, strike out for the island with all your muscle. Come on!"

"May the ould boy sink thim!" muttered Barney.

He started after Frank, but the light followed them, and the boat kept drawing nearer every moment, soon caught up to them, rowed by four sturdy sailors and steered by Rufus Prince.

Both Frank and Barney fought off the eager sailors as best they could, but they were soon exhausted, and, taken at a disadvantage, they were overpowered, hauled into the boat, and bound hand and foot.

## CHAPTER 5.

### A Bold Bid for Liberty.—In the Grip of a Whirlpool.—A Villain's Reward.

STRIPPED of their diving-costumes, and sitting on the sofa in Rufus Prince's richly-furnished cabin, Frank and Barney were utterly at the mercy of their enemy. He sat opposite them at a table, with an ugly, sneering smile upon his dark face, and after

intently eyeing Frank for a few minutes he said, in caustic tones:

"This is a pleasure I hardly dared to anticipate, Frank Reade."

"No doubt," returned Frank, lightly; "but before we exchange pleasantries let me ask you a question: What about the 'Silver Queen,' which was sunk between here and Cuba?"

"Well, what about it?" snapped Rufus Prince.

"Your father is fighting for insurance on her, isn't he?"

"He is, and he will get it, too."

"Never! That ship was scuttled!"

"You lie!"

"Thank you. But fortunately I have got proof of it."

"How dare you even insinuate such a thing?"

"Because I and my friend were on board her."

"What! under the sea?"

"Exactly—by means of my boat, the 'Ghost.'"

"And you saw——"

"The remains of the bribed captain, from which I recovered the auger that did the job. He, in the commission of his villainy, was knocked down by a box that fell on him. Pinioned to the floor beside the holes he made in the garboards he was carried to the bottom in the hold of the 'Silver Queen.'"

Rufus Prince's face turned deathly pale, for he knew in his heart that his father was a guilty man.

"Ridiculous!" he snorted. "But where is this proof you speak of?"

"On board the 'Ghost.' She is under the sea in charge of another friend of mine," returned Frank, not meaning to give away the fact that Pomp had been overpowered.

"And has the 'North Star's' treasure on board?"

"Certainly; entirely out of your reach."

"Had you anything to do with the disappearance of——"

"Ben Bolt, I presume you mean?"

"Yes. You did, or else you would not know his name."

"He is a prisoner under the sea in my boat."

"Oh! then he is alive yet?"

"Decidedly. I could have killed Tom Krook and his companion had I so desired; but, although they attempted to take my life, I spared them."

"How kind—how humane—generous of you!"

"Don't sneer. It is entirely misplaced. To show you that I have a high regard for human life let me save yours."

"Save my life! What from?"

"I had a talk with Ben Bolt, that is all. He said that your crew are going to kill you."

"What for?"

"To wrest that treasure from you—if you get it. The fact is they know that you and Tom Krook planned to get the money in your possession, and instead of dividing with them, as you originally agreed to do, you and the giant intended to desert the men, taking the money with you. To preclude the possibility of such a plan being carried out the men meant to reverse the tables by killing you and keeping the gold for themselves. So, you see, you are very fortunate in not getting that half-million dollars, and I have saved your life by forestalling you on the job."

"Is this the truth?" demanded Rufus Prince, uneasily.

"Certainly. Isn't your plot exposed? That shows what a scoundrel you are!" said Frank, coolly.

"Be careful!" hissed the other, malevolently, as he bounded to his feet, raised his clenched fist over Frank's head, and glared down at him with blazing eyes. "You are at my mercy, and with one blow I could crush you!"

"Which would end all your hopes of ever recovering a dollar of the 'North Star's' treasure," quietly said Frank.

Rufus Prince's arm dropped to his side, and he sat down again.

"You are right!" he panted, furiously. "I must restrain my passion. Were it not for that I should be tempted to kill you on the spot—to crush in that sneering, sarcastic face of yours as I would a viper's!"

"What an inordinate love for gold you have, to be sure!" said Frank. "But while I am at it I may as well discharge my whole battery of accusations against you. There is a very detestable scoundrel in the office of the secretary of the navy. He is a friend of yours, and must be thrown out neck and crop. He furnished you with a copy of the papers the Government gave to me, and he tampered with mine to lead me astray——"

"I know it!" said Rufus Prince. "It was done at my order."

"Just as I suspected. The east ought never to stand for the north. You should never try to remodel our accepted geography. You are incapable of doing it fairly."

At this juncture a sailor entered and saluted Prince.

"That submarine boat's in sight, sir!" said the man.

"What! Where?"

"About a mile off our port, coming towards us."

"Good! You may go. No, stay! Remain to guard these two men while I run out and have a look at the 'Ghost.'"

Left alone in the cabin, guarded by the sailor, Frank and Barney glanced at each other in silence a moment. The foremast hand leaned against the closed door and fixed a steady glance upon the two prisoners, and



out on the deck the rest of the crew were creating a great hubbub over the advent of the "Ghost," which was approaching. Presently Frank, who had struck an idea for an attempt at escape, contrived to whisper a few words to Barney, who nodded vigorously in reply.

A little later the sailor saw a look of unutterable agony cross Frank's face, and the youth doubled himself far over.

"Oh! oh! oh!" he gasped, spasmodically.

"What's ther matther?" demanded Barney, in frightened tones.

"Stop me! Hold me! Oh, such pain!"

As Frank said this he fell upon the floor in a heap, squirming round as if in convulsions, and evincing every evidence of some serious ailment. As he calculated the sailor rushed up to him with an expression of alarm, and, as he bent over Frank, Barney knocked him flying across the cabin. The Irishman had jaws of iron, and in a marvellously short space of time he picked up between his teeth a big sheath-knife which lay on the cabin table and cut Frank's bonds.

To liberate Barney then only occupied an instant, and before the astonished sailor could get upon his feet and see what had occurred they both attacked him. Frank caught him by the throat, strangling back a cry that rose to his lips, while Barney, using the rope which had held them, bound his arms and legs. A gag was thrust into his mouth and tied there, and ere the bewildered fellow could well realise what had happened to him he found himself a helpless prisoner.

"Success!" whispered Frank. "Here! a window, Barney. We can look out and see what is occurring before we venture upon the deck. Ah! there is the 'Ghost'!"

He had gone to a window, and, glancing over the sea, he saw the electric light reflected upon his boat. That with the light already in it showed him the interior of the pilot-house, in which stood a man. It was Ben Bolt. Frank's heart sank within him.

"He yet holds the 'Ghost'!" he groaned.

"An', be jabers, ther baste is a-comin' back ter this schooner," added Barney; "which manes that he's a throifle afeared av roonin' ther 'Ghost' alone, an' is a-goin' ter divvy up wid thim spalpeens beyant on ther deck, Mather Frank."

Frank pushed open the cabin door and crept out, Barney following close at his heels. Everybody was crowded along the port bulwarks gazing at the approaching submarine, upon which the man on the bridge kept the searchlight turned in all its dazzling brilliancy and power.

The starboard side was thus left unguarded. Frank and Barney softly crept from the cabin door across the deck, and reaching the side they found a rope coiled on a belaying-pin, and dropped one end over. The other end was fastened to the belaying-pin.

Down went Barney like a shot, and Frank followed him as rapidly as possible, and noticed, as he went below the rail, that they had escaped observation. They both sank in the water and arose.

"Keep out of the sheen of the light," continued Frank.

"The moonlight's a'gin' us," muttered Barney, ruefully.

"Never mind that. We will do the best we can."

They swam round under the stern, and, making a slight circuit to keep out of the direct range of vision of the crew of the "Sea Fox," they boldly struck out towards the "Ghost." The electric boat was hardly half a mile distant.

"Keep your body submerged as much as possible and swim under water as frequently as you can, Barney."

On, on, on they forged through the long ground-swell, at one moment down in the trough, and the next rising up on the rolling crests.

They forged ahead as fast as they could go, and had reached a distance of five hundred yards when suddenly there sounded the sharp crack of a revolver behind them on the deck of the "Sea Fox," and a voice yelled:

"There they goes! There they goes!"

The bullet whistled harmlessly over their heads, and Frank saw the sailors make a rush for the port side again.

"Fire a shot at them from the gun!" roared Prince's voice.

Frank and Barney silently glanced at each other, and swam on towards the "Ghost," feeling tired and despairing. To increase the peril, the searchlight swept round from the "Ghost," and was turned full upon them. They then presented an excellent target for gun-practice.

"They be's a-bringin' ther cannon ter wan av their gangways," muttered Barney, as he glanced back at the schooner.

"But it remains to be seen if they are good marksmen," the youth replied, carelessly, as he, too, looked back.

He saw Rufus Prince in the act of discharging the piece. The next instant a thunderous report rang out. They swam slightly apart. In that brief instant they were courting a terrible death, for the shrieking shot fell between them. Had they not separated, one or the other would have perished.

"Our time to die has not come yet," grimly exclaimed Frank.

"An' be ther saints av glory here's the 'Ghost'!" gasped Barney.

The submarine had swerved into the sheen of light and dashed towards them before Ben Bolt saw them in the water. The next moment they both grasped hold of a part of the hull, and were dragged along with it.

Again the gun on the deck of the "Sea

Fox" boomed, and a shot came screaming towards the "Ghost." It flew over the pilot-house, and scared Ben Bolt. He imagined that his messmates were trying to sink the electric boat, and did not see Barney or Frank. In terror lest he might lose his life he turned the boat completely round, and sped out to sea again.

Frank got upon the deck. Then Ben Bolt saw him, and started. One of the windows stood open, and he bent forward, peered harder at Frank, and exclaimed:

"Great guns! Is that you?"

"You will soon see!" Frank replied, grimly.

He started to cross the deck, to reach the trap behind the pilot-house, when Ben Bolt picked up the same pistol with which he had been menacing Pomp under the water, and thrusting it through the small window he pointed it at Frank, and cried:

"Stop whar you are, or I'll blow your brains out!"

Frank saw Barney clamber up on the deck. Then an idea occurred to him, and he acted on it.

"Barney!" he shouted. "Help—help! Quick!"

With a start Ben Bolt hurriedly glanced back over his shoulder to see whom Frank was addressing. Then, with a panther-like spring, the young inventor landed in front of the diver and caught hold of his arm.

Ben Bolt tried to drag his arm in through the little window, but Frank held on to him like grim death.

"No, you don't!" cried the boy. "I've got you, and I'm going to keep hold of you, you beggar!"

The sailor struggled with all his brute strength to get his arm in, but it was unavailing.

"Get inside—quick, and tackle him from the rear, Barney!" cried Frank.

Barney opened the trap and disappeared below.

"Yer a-haulin' ther hull arm off o' me!" bellowed the sailor.

"I don't care! Why don't you keep still, then?"

Ben Bolt was not to be stopped, though. In spite of the intense pain he was suffering, he fought with tigerish fury to liberate himself from Frank's clutches before Barney could attack him from behind.

He did not succeed in his design, however, for Barney got up in the pilot-house and caught him round the neck with his arm, and as Frank let go of him he was jerked back.

The young inventor snatched the pistol from his hand before he let go of the wretch, and, seeing Barney struggling on the floor with him, he ran across the deck, closed the trap after him, and, getting up in the pilot-house, he arrived just in time to save the Irishman's life. Ben Bolt was stronger than

Barney, and he had got him down upon the floor, where he was making every effort to choke him to death, when Frank rushed in and fell upon him.

His arrival altered the state of affairs considerably, for between the two they soon overpowered the sailor and made a prisoner of him once more. They had hardly accomplished this when Frank happened to glance out of the window, and a cry pealed from his lips.

"Barney—quick! Look! We must go down under the sea!"

He grasped the lever and sank the electric boat like a shot, for in another minute she would have smashed into the stern of the "Sea Fox," down upon which she was bearing at full speed; for during the fight the wheel had been neglected, and the "Ghost" described a circle.

Down she went beneath the waves, and ahead she spurted, just grazing the keel of the schooner in her descent.

All the crew of Rufus Prince's vessel were upon the after-deck leaning over the taffrail, glaring down at the "Ghost," and their shouts had reached Frank's ears.

As the boat descended Frank rapidly shut the window through which Ben Bolt's arm had been thrust.

The crew of the "Sea Fox" had been expecting a collision, but by Frank's quick work such a catastrophe was averted.

"Faix, an' where is ther naygur?" gasped Barney, as the "Ghost" went down. "I don't say him anywheres."

"You—speak!" exclaimed Frank, addressing Ben Bolt. "You know where he is. What have you done with him?"

"He's a goner!" replied the man, sulkily.

"Dead!" cried Frank, in alarmed tones.

"Mebbe. I dunno."

"Howly buns!" roared Barney, flying into a terrible rage. "An' hev yer ther brass ter lay there an' tell us yer kilt ther naygur? Och, but it's yer life Oi'll be afther havin' if ye've given him the laist tashte av throuble, ye haythen! Now, out wid it. Where is he?"

"Down in Davy Jones's Locker!" growled the sailor.

"Have you drowned him?" demanded Frank.

"That's more'n I kin tell. I made him tell me how ter navigate this 'ere craft, an' then I made him put on one o' them 'ere queer diving-suits an' leave ther boat on ther bottom. He wuz puffedekly willin', and said as he wur a-goin' ter look for you two."

"Great Heaven! You inhuman monster! To abandon the poor wretch at the bottom of the sea!"

"Oh, it wuz his own idee. He wouldn't stay aboard, anyhow, as he wuz mighty on-easy about you an' that Irishman."

"Whereabouts did you leave him?"

"Nigh on to ther wreck o' ther 'North Star.'" "

"Then, by heavens! if after we search for him he should not be there, you shall share his fate!"

Frank sank the "Ghost" lower, and, increasing the force of the electric lights, he began to hunt for the wreck. He had a fair idea whereabouts it was, and after some trouble he succeeded in finding it. But no trace of Pomp was to be seen, although the "Ghost" explored every foot of the water for half a mile around it.

"That settles your fate," said Frank to the rascally sailor, as he brought the boat to a pause near the wreck. "He's gone, and you are his murderer. But you shall share his fate. Barney, put a diving-suit on this fiend, with air enough in the reservoir to last him ten hours. When it is used up he will perish, like a rat in a trap, at the bottom of the sea."

"No, no!" frantically yelled the frightened man. "Spare me—oh, spare me!"

"I won't!" relentlessly cried Frank. "You had no mercy upon the poor negro, so I shall have none on you. Prepare for your doom!"

Ben Bolt begged and prayed, yelled, grovelled, and implored with tears streaming down his cheeks, but Frank was inexorable.

A diving-suit was forced upon him by the two, despite his ravings and his struggles, and when he was weighted and fixed so that he could not remove the lead to rise to the surface, they dragged him over to the trap to thrust him into the sea.

But just as he was about to be sent forth, open went the trap, and in rushed a man in diver's costume. Frank and Barney started back, and Ben Bolt fell on his knees. For an instant the newcomer stared at them. Then he opened the bull's-eye in his visor.

"Pomp!" exclaimed Frank, catching sight of his face.

"Fo' de Lawd, it am me, an'—oh, I'se so glad to see yo' got de 'Ghost' back dat I done cry wid joy, bress youse."

"Saved!" screamed Ben Bolt, wildly.

And as Frank and Barney shook hands with the darkie, Pomp uttered a chuckle and danced a double-shuffle in his diving-suit.

"Where in the world have you been, Pomp?" asked Frank.

"When I see dat you an' Barney wuzn't heah, sah," replied the darkie, solemnly, "dis chile fink hes heart flop right up in hes froat. So I done take a walk roun' to fine yo'. Couldn't do it, nohow, so I cum back ag'in, an' dar, bress yo' soul, I done see de 'Ghost.' Golly! Wuzn't dis niggah glad!"

Barney picked up a new whisky-flask he had purchased before leaving Readestown, pulled out the cork, and exclaimed, with a grin and a wink:

"Begob, an' it's ther rale ould shtuff as

yer in naid o' now, Pomp, ter braish up yer nerves afther what ye wint troo."

"I 'spects a little ob dat licker's neah as good's a glass ob niggah-gin, Barney. T'ank yo' berry much."

He took the bottle, winked at the Irishman, and said:

"An' heah am yo' bes' regards, Marse Frank."

Then he put the flask to his thick lips, took a big suck, shut one eye, pulled harder, and then withdrew the bottle. A look of intense disgust crossed his sable face.

"Tain't got nuffin in it!" he exclaimed.

"Faith, an' Oi didn't say it had," laughed Barney.

Pomp flung down the bottle and walked away in a huff, leaving Frank and Barney to grin over the way he was taken in.

"You had better take off that suit now, Ben Bolt," said Frank, a moment later. "Your life will be spared for the hangman. But, to tell the truth, we ought to make you go, for the beastly way in which you deserted Barney and me."

"Don't kill a poor feller, cap, an' I swear as I won't never do nuthin' ag'in yer ez long ez I live," groaned the sailor.

He rose to his feet and divested himself of the suit.

"I don't think it is very likely you will do any more harm," replied Frank, "for I'm going to imprison you. Tie him up tighter this time, Barney."

"L'ave it ter me, sor, fer that."

"How did you release yourself before, Ben Bolt?" asked Frank.

"Yer see, yer didn't tie me up very strong, sir, an'—"

"And you slipped your bonds off, eh?"

"That's about ther size of it, cap."

"He's ready, Masther Frank," cried Barney, giving a final tug at the rope which held the unhappy man.

"Then lock him up in No. 7 cabin, Barney."

The Irishman seized the diver by the arm and led him to one of the empty compartments on the port side. Thrusting him into the dark place Barney bolted the trap-door, and left him there all alone. Frank had gone to the pilot-house, and when Barney entered he was saying to Pomp:

"I am going over to the Oyanok Island to anchor until to-morrow, before I start back across the Gulf of Mexico, as I need some fresh water."

"Yo' go undah de watah, sah?"

"Part of the way. Ah, here is Barney! You are just the one I want. A lookout, I find, must be kept all the time; for as we approach nearer to the land we are apt to encounter sunken coral reefs, and if we should chance to strike one hard enough with the bow we might ruin the 'Ghost.'"

"Shure, an' Oi will do that juty, sor."

"An' I'll see if I kain't git up sumfin' to eat," said Pomp.

"Good! I am as hungry as a bear, and guess Barney is sharp-set, so the quicker you do it the better pleased we shall be."

The "Ghost" then left the sunken "North Star" for ever. Going southward, about twenty-five feet from the surface of the water, she headed straight towards Oyapok Island. Frank soon saw by the way the bottom began to shelve upward that they were nearing land. He accordingly turned the "Ghost" westward, in order to run her in between the island and the mainland.

The cove in which he had once before been sheltered afforded a fine anchorage, in which he could keep his boat above or below the water.

Barney was keeping a sharp lookout ahead, and Pomp had just come in to announce that the meal was ready, when Barney suddenly exclaimed:

"Howly poker! phwat's that?"

At the same juncture the "Ghost" received a wrench that flung her bow round to the southward, and a violent tremor shook her from stem to stern. Pomp was flung down upon the floor.

"Rocks?" demanded Frank, quickly.

"No. Och, murdher! an' it's meself as don't know phat."

Frank glanced ahead, and saw a huge current of dark water lying in the surrounding green sea, which was rushing ahead with frightful velocity. The "Ghost" had been caught in this submarine tide, occasioning the shock they felt, and was being borne along with it much faster than the engines worked.

"What can this fearful under-current mean?" Frank gasped, in amazement. "I don't understand it at all."

"Turrin her out—turrin her out!" cried Barney.

Frank essayed to do so, but he could not get the rudder to answer.

"Faix! an' thish is awful!" muttered Barney.

These words had no sooner left his lips than the "Ghost" went off at an angle with the strange current and flew around in a great circle, from the centre of which came a loud noise that roared like the din of a battery of guns. Then the truth dawned upon Frank's mind.

"We are in a whirlpool!" he exclaimed.

Round and round went the "Ghost" in circles, each revolution narrowing, and some terrible unseen power dragging the boat down, down, down, as if a giant grasped it. Faster, faster, and still faster rushed the boat, until it was almost at the bottom, and its flying revolutions made the three adventurers faint, dizzy, and sick. Frank glanced to the window and dropped the wheel.

Beneath them yawned a tremendous hole in the bottom of the sea, into which this terrific

vortex of water was thundering, the enormous suction drawing the "Ghost" down into its jaws.

"We are lost!" cried Frank, in despairing, gasping tones.

The "Ghost" was carried down with irresistible force, and the three adventurers were flung over on the floor.

Then suddenly the vessel righted itself. It sped along at a high rate of speed, her engine working, too, and the electric lights blazing. Night on the land then was not half as dark as the Stygian darkness that surrounded them.

Feeling the boat riding on an even keel again Frank rose, and staggering with pale face over to the window he peered out.

They were in a tunnel probably running under Oyapok Island, the whirlpool being at a point between Guiana and a little strip of land.

For an instant Frank wished that instead of going for an anchorage at the island under water he had risked being seen by the crew of the "Sea Fox." Then, reassured by seeing the boat going along swiftly but safely, and nothing apparently out of order, he regained courage, and spoke a few encouraging words to Barney and Pomp.

Then Frank seized the wheel and guided the boat as best he could. Ten minutes of mental agony followed, but after that the boat emerged into the sea again.

Then Frank raised her to the top. As he expected they were on the east side of the island, from which he inferred that the current passed under the land.

"This is the effect of the Gulf Stream," he said, as the "Ghost" glided over the surface of the water again. "It sweeps across the Atlantic at this juncture, then bends northward, where it rushes into the Gulf of Mexico. As all its force in crossing the Atlantic is spent against the island, it must have worn that tunnel through under the island."

The three were heartily thankful over their escape, and the boat was steered round to the south side of the island, where an anchorage was found. Supper was then partaken of, and, arranging a watch, they took turns at gaining some much-needed rest after the fatigues of their past experiences.

On the following day water was procured at a spring bubbling up out of the ground near an old ruined stone house, and they prepared for an immediate return home, as their work was done.

Leaving the island in the afternoon under a full head of power on the surface of the sea the "Ghost" ploughed her way round the island.

The "Sea Fox" had sailed away, but she was descried to the northward on her homeward voyage. It was evident that Rufus Prince had given up all hope of gaining pos-

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session of the treasure from Frank. Before nightfall they ranged up within a short distance of the "Sea Fox," and the three brought their glasses to bear upon her.

A scene of horror was presented to them.

Rufus Prince and the giant, Tom Krook, were each bound to the foot of the masts. The whole crew had mutinied, and, having broken open the liquor locker, were all in a state of drunkenness. Some were quarrelling and fighting, a few lay about the decks, stupid or sleeping, while those who were left in partial possession of their senses were working the schooner.

The "Ghost" was kept on her way, and some of the crew of the "Sea Fox" caught sight of her. Before an hour had passed, however, the "Ghost" faded from their sight as if it were a veritable phantom. On sped the marvellous boat, and without any further accident she eventually reached Readestown.

There her precious cargo was sent on to the Naval Department at Washington, the papers in the safe remaining in Frank's possession for personal delivery. Ben Bolt was made a prisoner and locked up, and a day later Frank boarded a train for Washington.

The secretary of the navy had already received the boxes of gold, and when Frank placed the valuable books and documents in his hands he could hardly find words to express the extreme astonishment he felt.

"You have more than earned the reward," said he, "and I scarcely know how to thank you on behalf of the Government, for you have acquitted yourself in a right noble and loyal manner."

Frank then sat down and recited his story. The indignation of the secretary knew no bounds when he learned about the perfidy of one of his clerks, who had played in with Rufus Prince.

The rascal was very readily discovered, and he was dismissed.

Frank then received a cheque for the amount of the reward, and, leaving Washington, proceeded to New York.

There he laid the whole matter of the lost "Silver Queen" before the Board of Underwriters, and when he had proved his charge of villainy against Messrs. Prince and Co., by producing the auger and the testimony of Barney and Pomp had been given, a great sensation resulted.

The "Sea Fox" and her crew were never heard of again, and it was generally believed that she perished with all hands in a terrible cyclone that swept the Gulf of Mexico.

But Frank had little time to think of her in, for within a day of his return to his home he received a visitor, whose business again sent the young inventor exploring the ocean depths in search of new perils and adventures.

And so important was this mission that we will commence a new chapter to give the opening details of it.

## CHAPTER 6.

Frank Undertakes Another Perilous Voyage.  
—In Search of the Great Whirlpool.

FRANK READE was in his workshop, and was upon the point of giving orders for the dismantling of the "Ghost," when he was informed that a visitor wished to see him, and a card was handed to him bearing the inscription: "Mr. Hayden, Hitchcock and Haden, New York City."

Frank gave orders for the visitor to be shown into his private office, and almost immediately repaired thither himself.

"The object of my visit, Mr. Reade," said the visitor, as soon as Frank had introduced himself, "is to confer with you upon a subject of the utmost importance to our firm."

"Indeed!" said Frank. "In what manner can I serve you?"

"First let me tell you of a heavy loss which we incurred not long since. One of our best ships, the 'Nautilus,' has been overdue six months."

"From what port?" asked Frank, with some interest.

"Liverpool. She has never been seen nor heard of since leaving the English coast."

"She is probably at the bottom of the sea."

"It may be so. Yet myself and my partner have dared to hope that she is still afloat somewhere on the ocean."

Frank Reade was silent for a moment. He appeared to be doing some deep thinking upon the subject. When finally he raised his head he said, slowly:

"My dear sir, I do not desire to say anything to depress your hopes, but I much fear that they are illusive."

Hayden changed his position, and at once adopted argument.

"Will you kindly listen to a few reasons for our apparently foolish belief? The 'Nautilus' is not the first vessel, sailing much the same course, to disappear in this mysterious manner. Not the least trace of any such has been found. The usual conclusion has been that they have foundered at sea.

"Now, myself and my partner have deeply studied the matter, and we have come to the conclusion that such an hypothesis is not wholly correct."

"What, then, do you believe is the real cause of this mysterious disappearance of ships?" asked Frank.

"You have doubtless heard of the Great Whirlpool?"

Frank Reade gave a start. His experiences in the whirlpool of Oyapok were too fresh to think of without a shudder.

"I have," he replied, as an inkling of the other's meaning began to dawn upon him.

"I believe," resumed Hayden, "that many of the vessels which so mysteriously disappear at sea really are caught in the waters of that mighty malestrom."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Frank, with deep interest. "But is not the course of Atlantic vessels generally far removed from the locality of the whirlpool?"

"Not more than seven or eight hundred miles. A protracted storm might drive a vessel into the current of the maelstrom."

"That may be. But how about this Great Whirlpool? Have you ever seen it, and does it really exist? I believe there are many sailors who discredit its existence, or, at least, its powers to hold a ship in its midst."

"Its existence is an undisputed fact," said Hayden. "I have seen its outer current, and know that many ships have disappeared in it."

"And you believe that the 'Nautilus' is in its clutches?"

"I am not sure of that. It is only a theory."

"It may be founded on fact, though," said Frank, thoughtfully; "but may I ask in what manner I can assist you in determining the problem?"

Hayden changed his position, gazed straight at Frank, and said:

"The object of my visit, Mr. Reade, I may as well tell you flatly, is to endeavour to induce you to aid us with your submarine boat in determining the fate of the 'Nautilus.'"

Frank was silent for a moment. The young inventor was not one to plunge headlong into an enterprise. But after a moment's mature deliberation he extended his hand to Hayden and said, pleasantly:

"I have just returned from a trip in my submarine, the 'Ghost,' and intended taking a rest. Still, I cannot resist the excitement which the hunt for the 'Nautilus' promises, and I promise you I will set out with as little delay as possible in search of the whirlpool and your ship."

A wild cry of joy escaped Hayden's lips, and he caught Frank's hand impulsively.

"Oh, thank you!" he cried. "I have just one more favour to ask."

"And that——"

"May I accompany you on board the 'Ghost' on that trip?"

"I see no reason why you may not," replied the young inventor.

A happier man than Hayden at that moment it would have been difficult to imagine. And in his excitement he did a foolish thing. He went at once and telegraphed to Hitchcock the joyful news.

The latter spread the report. In a jiffy the newspapers had it, and it went all over the continent.

The subject was upon everybody's tongue and everybody was interested. Two or three column articles upon the terrors of the maelstrom were eagerly read by the public. The result of this, in at least one instance, led to beneficial results.

There had been one important reason for learning the fate of the "Nautilus." In prison there languished a young man charged with the awful crime of murder. The evidence seemed all against him, but yet many believed in his innocence. Hardly a day after the report of the proposed trip of the "Ghost" had spread a man called at Frank Reade's house.

His card read: "Allan Pinkham, Chief of Detectives."

Frank, of course, gave him an audience.

"I will be brief, Mr. Reade," said the visitor. "You can see by my card that I am a detective."

"I can," replied Frank. "In what manner can I serve you?"

"I understand that you are about to go in quest of the lost ship the 'Nautilus'?"

"I am."

"Then let me tell you a story which I am sure will arouse your sympathy. One evening, not more than a year ago, two young men occupied the same room in a certain lodging-house in New York. Both were clerks in mercantile houses. They were warm friends, until one fatal night they quarrelled over a game of poker.

"Albert Dodge, one of them, accused Charles Haynes, the other, of cheating. It was to Haynes an unjust accusation, and they parted in anger.

"The result was that Haynes removed his effects to another part of the city, and from that moment terms of friendship ceased. Six months passed. Haynes was regular at his work, and in all this time had seen nothing whatever of his former room-mate. But one evening, going home from work, he had reached a dark corner, when he heard a groan.

"He paused, and was thrilled to see the form of a man lying in the gutter. There was no policeman in sight. What was to be done? Again the man groaned. This was enough for Haynes. At once he stepped into the gutter.

"What is the matter, friend?" he asked, kindly. "Are you hurt?"

"Then he lifted the other's head up in the light.

"Good heavens!" he gasped, "it is Albert Dodge! What has happened to you?"

"The injured man made a spasmodic effort and whispered:

"Charlie, is it you? Oh, I have been terribly used! I am dying!"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Charlie, in horror. "Old friend, tell me, how did it happen?"

"I—do not know. My strength is—going fast. Hold up my head—so! Charlie, old man, I am sorry I quarrelled with you!"

"Let bygones be!" said Charlie, "tell me, how did you come here? Why, there is blood on your face and—all over you! Oh, the wound upon your head!"

"Yes—and a knife-thrust in the back of my neck. I am going to die, Charlie. A thief did it, I think. He came up behind me, struck me down, rifled my pockets, and fled."

"Before anything further could be said or done, Albert Dodge died in his friend's arms.

"With horror and grief Charles was about to rise, when his hand came in contact with the handle of the cruel knife yet buried in Dodge's neck.

"Some impulse prompted him with awful horror to pull it out. The blade came out suddenly, and the blood spurted over his hand and sleeve. He rose to his feet with his hand clasping the hilt.

"Fatal move! At that moment two officers and three civilians came down in the glare of the light. They saw him standing there with the knife in his hand. Blood was upon him, and he was convicted of murder then and there, though as innocent as an unborn babe."

The detective ceased speaking for a moment. Frank Reade had been listening with intense horror and interest.

"Indeed," he said, "that is terrible. Is there no way to prove him innocent?"

"No way, save to find the real murderer."

"Cannot that be done?"

"Wait! Only a few days before the sailing of the 'Nautilus,' I received word from a colleague, Sam Hall, of Scotland Yard, that he had a man in hand, by the name of Black Billy Benton, whom he believed was the murderer of Albert Dodge. He expected to get a confession, and if he succeeded he would come to America with it at once. Black Billy was on his death-bed."

"And did Hall get the confession?" asked Frank.

"I believe that he did, for I learn that he was one of the cabin passengers of the ill-fated 'Nautilus.' If the ship has gone down, then his body must be with her, and with that, no doubt, is the necessary evidence with which to clear Charles Haynes. That is my story."

Frank Reade drew a long breath.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "I am much interested in this affair. Mr. Pinkham, I can assure you. I think I understand now why you have come to see me. I promise to do all in my power to procure from Hall, or from his body, the papers necessary to clear poor Haynes."

"I thank you," said the detective, and a little later he took his leave.

Frank was still sitting in his office thinking over the strange story he had heard when there was a light rap on the door.

"Come in!" he said.

The door opened. A man stood upon the threshold—a strange-looking man about sixty years of age, with white hair and beard, and immense goggles. His dress was rather

slouchy, and he wore a broad-brimmed hat. Yet there was an air about him which seemed to say that he was a man of learning.

Without any preamble this strange-looking person introduced himself as Professor Bookleigh, and added that he had been appointed by the Geological and Submarine Research Society to request Frank Reade to allow him to accompany the trip in search of the "Nautilus," in the interests of science.

Frank asked him several questions, and examined the letters of introduction which he brought. Finding that everything was all square, he gave his consent for the old professor to join the expedition, and so sent the strange individual into transports of delight.

Then the young inventor set to work to prepare the "Ghost" for her second voyage.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The Drifting Ship.—Right into the Whirlpool.—The Spectre Craft.

"ONLY five hundred miles from the vicinity of the maelstrom and all going well!"

Such was Frank Reade's report some days after the "Ghost" had left her moorings and headed for the open sea.

Barney and Pomp had enjoyed the voyage thus far in their own peculiar way. They were a very social pair, and never at a loss for diversion when together. Indeed, their betters could well afford to descend to their quarters occasionally and listen to their entertainment. This consisted of songs and dances and banjo-playing by Pomp. Barney played the fiddle, and could rattle off a jig or a ballad in true Hibernian style.

"Indeed, the trip would be monotonous but for Barney and Pomp," declared Hayden. "They are a concert troupe entire."

"They are remarkable specimens of their kind," affirmed Professor Bookleigh, who looked at them in the light of the scientist and student.

So the trip continued with no untoward incident to mar the harmony of the adventurers. So far they had been under water nearly all the time; but when they were quite near the whirlpool Frank decided that it would be just as well to travel on the surface.

So he sent the "Ghost" up from the depths, and the voyagers once more travelled in the light of day.

All scrambled for the deck, and it seemed good to once more have the sunlight and the world spread before their gaze.

"The bottom of the sea is a very wonderful and a very strange place," declared Walter Hayden; "but I should not care to remain there always."

Frank had been studying the horizon closely with a glass. He now gave a sharp exclamation. Hayden, who was near him, heard it.

"What is it, Frank?" he asked.

The young inventor handed him the glass. "Do you see a sail away off yonder?" he asked.

The young shipowner took the glass and studied the distant object.

"Yes," he said, "it is certainly a white sail."

"Well, at a rough reckoning I should say it was thirty miles distant. If I am right that ship is in the outer circle of the Great Whirlpool!"

Hayden was astonished.

"Do you mean to say that we are as near to the whirlpool as that?" he gasped.

"I do."

"And yonder—— But I cannot believe it!"

"You shall very soon see."

"And—do you think it can be possible that that ship is the 'Nautilus'?"

"No," replied Frank, with a laugh. "It is not at all likely that it is. The 'Nautilus' would be deeper in the maelstrom."

The speed of the "Ghost" was increased. Every moment they drew nearer to the ship. Soon the submarine began to move in a peculiar manner.

Then it did not require a keen eye to see a strange action of the waters. They did not seem to rise and fall in tossing waves in the ordinary manner. But there was a peculiar swelling motion and a swirling sort of current. A light object, such as a cork, thrown overboard would recede rapidly to the westward.

"Do you see that?" cried Frank, triumphantly. "We are now in the outer sweep of the maelstrom."

"So the maelstrom is really a fact?" said Hayden, in deep wonderment.

Professor Bookleigh stood near. He had been studying the phenomenon himself very closely.

"It is certainly a wonderful action of Nature's forces," he declared. "Truly the vessel so unfortunate as to get into the clutches of this monster is doomed."

"Of course," replied Frank. "Well, my friends, let us see if we cannot hail the ship over there."

A signal flag was run up on the mainmast of the "Ghost." At first the distant vessel did not see it. Then she answered. A white flag fluttered at her masthead. She was seen to heave to. The "Ghost" at once shot towards her.

Frank Reade stood on the main deck, and as the "Ghost" drew nearer he saw that the vessel was one of the merchant build.

She had been vainly tacking and trying to get out of the clutches of the powerful current. But it seemed to hold her, and all efforts were in vain.

"Boat ahoy!" came the hail from the ship's deck.

"Ahoy!" replied Frank.

"What craft is that?"

"The 'Ghost,' submarine boat. What ship is that?"

"The 'Sachem.'"

"What's your trouble?"

"That is what we don't know. We are in some kind of an ocean current, and have been fighting against it for four days now, but can't get one way nor t'other."

"Do you know what this current means? You are in the outer circle of the Great Whirlpool!"

A cry of horror and dismay came from the deck of the "Sachem."

"Then we'll never get out of it!" someone cried. "They say a ship once in the clutches of the maelstrom can never escape."

"It may be so. However, I am going to try to save you."

A shout of joy went up from the deck of the "Sachem" at what was evidently pleasing news to them.

Frank now allowed the "Ghost" to run up quite close to the side of the ship. The captain, a tall, bearded fellow, descended to the "Ghost's" deck and shook hands with Frank.

He gave his name as Andrew Clark, and seemed to be a genial, good-tempered fellow. He was delighted with the "Ghost" and its appointments, and listened attentively while Frank described some of the wonderful mechanism of the submarine.

"And what, may I ask, is your errand in these waters?" he asked Frank, with curiosity.

"I am looking for a ship supposed to be lost in this current," replied Frank. "It is the 'Nautilus,' of New York."

"The 'Nautilus'!" replied Captain Clark. "Why, I saw that ship in Liverpool six months ago!"

"Did you!" exclaimed Hayden. "Then you have met Captain Pitcher?"

"I know him well!"

A lengthy conversation followed. Captain Clark was able to throw much light upon the possible fate of the "Nautilus."

"I agree with you," said Clark, "that it is hardly likely that the 'Nautilus' was wrecked or lost at sea."

"She was so staunch a vessel, I suppose?"

"Certainly. There is no doubt that she is now somewhere in this fearful current. Captain Pitcher and I really had a conversation about taking this course home."

"That is enough!" cried Hayden, eagerly. "I will stake my life, then, that the 'Nautilus' is in the current of the whirlpool."

As quickly as possible a tow-line was laid from the submarine to the "Sachem."

The "Ghost," though a light craft, was a powerful one, and it easily towed the merchant ship.

For a good twenty miles the heavy current was battled with.



Then the "Sachem" lay over to the westward, safe beyond the reach of the deadly maelstrom.

Salutes were exchanged, and the "Sachem" and the "Ghost" parted company, the submarine going back into the current of the Great Whirlpool.

"Do you believe that the 'Ghost' will be able to overcome the inner currents of the whirlpool?" asked Hayden of the young inventor.

"We will proceed with caution and ascertain that fact."

And the young navigator proceeded on this plan. There was no doubt but that the whirlpool was a most powerful current. Bits of wreckage, rotten spars, floating chests, and broken oars were encountered at intervals. All were travelling in the same direction, which was pretty good evidence that they were in the maelstrom's current. How many years they had been drifting thus it was hard to say.

Deeper into the current the "Ghost" now boldly went. And at every few yards the current seemed to grow more powerful, until Barney and Pomp and even Frank himself became somewhat alarmed.

For several days the "Ghost" thus grappled with the current, then one night a strange phenomenon was witnessed.

Barney and Pomp were in the habit of dividing the watch. One remained on deck the first half of the night, and the latter the other half. This enabled one or the other to get needful sleep.

Upon the night in question it was Pomp's watch, and Barney was to relieve him at midnight.

It was an extremely dark night, and the searchlight's glare easily showed a pathway of light for a mile ahead.

The course had been set and the wheel was lashed by Pomp, who for some reason or other was fearfully sleepy.

Never before in his life had the darkie been guilty of the crime of sleeping at his post. But he could no more overcome the sensation now than he could have walked on the water.

He struggled with the feeling, but before he knew it his senses had left him. His head dropped upon his breast and he began to snore.

The "Ghost" went on through the night with increased speed, and by good luck encountered no obstacle big enough to injure her.

The midnight hour drew nearer, but still Pomp slept. Barney at the appointed hour was awakened by an electric alarm signal. He crawled out of his bunk and hastily dressed himself.

"Arrah, an' it w'u'd be foine to shlope the rist of the noite," he muttered, "but the naygur must have a chance!"

So the conscientious Celt crept up the

cabin stairs and into the pilot-house. And there to his astonishment he saw Pomp fast asleep.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" he gasped, "if the naygur ain't ashlope. Well, I niver! Shure, it's the fust toime!"

Barney's first impulse was to arouse the darkie; but then a brilliant idea occurred to the Celt.

"Begorra, it's a rare good chance for some fun!" he muttered. "On me wurrud I'll do it!"

Chuckling to himself Barney went to the electric table and connected a piece of wire with a disc.

This he placed close against the sole of one of Pomp's feet. Then he connected the wire with an electric switch on the table.

He turned on the current gradually until it began to work upon the nerves of the foot. Pomp began to mutter in his sleep, and moved a trifle.

Then Barney shut off the current.

The darkie became calm at once. As soon as he was satisfied that Pomp was deep enough in sleep, Barney repeated the operation.

Then he would chuckle in wildest glee.

"Shure, it'll be bad dreams he'll be afther having!" he muttered. "I'll give him a bit o' nightmare."

Certainly Pomp did not enjoy his sleep after that. The more he muttered and tossed, the more Barney laughed. But a turning of tables was at hand.

All this while the "Ghost" had been drifting on in its own manner.

Suddenly Barney glanced out of the pilot-house window, and as he did so he gave a wild shriek of terror.

There in the darkness he beheld an awful sight. A dismantled ship of huge proportions loomed up not fifty feet from the "Ghost."

It was a battered, storm-driven old wreck of a vessel, whose type was that of the past century. And at the port-holes and at the rails were ghastly skeleton forms of men.

In daylight this might not have had any effect upon Barney. But in the night the ship and its skeleton crew were all ablaze with a strange, unearthly light.

"Och, murther! Shure, it's the work of Satan!" Barney yelled. "Saint Pether, pre-sarve us! It's kilt we'll be! An' luk at the fearful loight an' ther awful dead corpuses!"

Pomp was instantly awakened, and he sprang up out of his chair with a wild yell.

To say which was the more terrified, the Celt or the darkie, would be indeed difficult.

What made the matter worse, as there was no guiding hand at the "Ghost's" wheel, she shot alongside the wreck. Some of the rigging became entangled, and the two vessels were inextricably fouled. It was a terrifying moment to the two servitors.

Of course, both ought to have been familiar with the peculiar properties of phosphorus in rotting wood in certain parts of the ocean. But their superstition was more overruling than their good sense.

Leaving everything they fled shrieking down into the cabin.

Of course everybody on board the "Ghost" was aroused. Frank Reade came tumbling out of his bunk. Professor Bookleigh and Hayden also appeared.

Frank made a dash for the deck fully anticipating some fearful calamity. For a moment, as he saw how affairs were, he stood spell-bound. He experienced no terror, for he comprehended the situation at a glance. But the luminous ship with its ghastly freight was to him an object of the deepest interest.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he muttered. "We have run alongside of a curiosity now. What is all this?"

"Great guns!" gasped Hayden. "What do you call it, Frank?"

"Phosphorus!" answered Professor Bookleigh, as Frank hesitated. "Truly a very strange but not uncommon phenomenon. I have known many a ship in the Indian Ocean to be ablaze with it, but never before in this part of the world."

"What an ancient type of ship!"

"No doubt she has been drifting in the whirlpool for fifty years or more."

"Very likely. What a fearful fate for her crew!"

Frank sprang into the pilot-house, and, coming out again, turned on the searchlight fully.

Its brilliant glare plainly revealed every detail within range of the light.

Dismantled and ruined, yet wonderfully preserved by the salt air, was everything. At a number of the open ports, as if vainly watching for a sail, were skeletons. By the rail and in various attitudes about the deck were others.

It was a ghastly and awful sight, but Frank Reade had nerves of iron, and he immediately decided to board the wreck.

Hayden and Pomp followed him, and a strange scene indeed it was which met their gaze.

The broad decks of the ancient vessel were covered with shells and sea-drift, which must have been deposited there in time of storm, for doubtless the waves rolled over the entire vessel.

It was a wonder indeed that so much was in its place. But the skeletons were seen to be incomplete, and such of them as remained seemed to have been held in place by somewhat rotten lashings.

The mainmast was broken short off about ten feet above the deck.

By examining it Frank found a dull silver plate which had an inscription upon it, which read:

### "THE 'PARADOX.' Built 1820, Liverpool."

"An English ship!" cried Frank. "It cannot be possible that she has sailed these seas since 1820."

"It does not follow," said Hayden. "She may have been in service fifty years after building."

"That is true," agreed Frank. "Those old-time vessels were capable of sailing the seas for a century without going to decay. They don't build such ships now."

Descending the rotten companion-way Frank entered the cabin. Fortunately the searchlight's glare came in through the open ports, making all as light as day.

The sight revealed was a thrilling one.

Upon a couch lay the skeleton of a man. At a table, above which hung a cabin-lamp, were the skeletons of two others. Upon the table were charts, a sextant, and a quadrant. All were remarkably well preserved.

This seemed to show that the masters of the ship had been vainly trying to locate their position.

Frank went to the table and examined the charts.

The lines and figures upon them were rather obscure, yet he was able to trace them quite well. It was evident that the two men had succumbed to death while in this despairing attempt to solve the mystery of the whirlpool current.

The cabin had been well furnished, and there was no doubt a goodly cargo aboard the ship. But it was easy to divine the fate which had overtaken the crew.

Months of being carried hopelessly onward in the inexorable current had passed by. The provisions had become exhausted, and every source of food supply was consumed. The result, of course, was certain death by starvation.

Frank opened one of the drawers in the table and gave a startled cry.

"What is that?" asked Hayden, as he came forward.

The young inventor took from the drawer quite a large book.

Upon its cover were printed the words:

### "LOG OF THE 'PARADOX.' "Captain Abram Skilings."

The first entry read:

"The 'Paradox' sailed from Liverpool for New York May 20, 1864."

Many pages of minute details of the voyage, but all unimportant, followed. Then came the account of a violent storm, which had driven them far out of their course.

"For ten weeks," the journal now read. "we have vainly tacked to the westward. We

find it impossible to make progress, and indeed seem to be hopelessly in the power of a certain ocean current, which is carrying us about in a perpetual circle. To-day our mate, Ned Foss, bluntly declares that we are in the grip of the Great Maelstrom. This means that we shall never see home or friends again, for wind or sail can never extricate us. We must drift on for ever. Starvation must be our final end—an awful death!”

Then followed rambling notes, and a few months later the entry read :

“Still in the clutch of the deadly maelstrom. To-day we opened our last keg of ship biscuits. Twenty-four of us there are, and these cannot last long. We have fished in vain, and tried to shoot seagulls. To-morrow we shall be for the first time without food. Heaven pity us! There is nothing now but death before us. Give us strength and courage to meet it.

“To-day (six weeks later) four died. This leaves only eight of the crew. Three of these are dying. There is no hope for any of us. I seem to be holding out better than the others. Perhaps Heaven has meant me to be the last to die. I pray not.”

Two weeks later :

“I have just closed the eyes of Lewis, the supercargo. I am now the only man left on board alive. In vain I have tried to get food. I can feel myself growing weaker daily, and know that it is a question of but little time. Yet I do not fear death. I know that the morrow will mercifully take me out of this career of misery and suffering.”

Here the journal ended.

“Golly, Marse Frank!” said Pomp, with dilated eyes, “dat am a drefful hard way fo’ to die!”

“Mercy on us!” exclaimed Hayden. “Is it possible that this old wreck has been drifting about in these waters for more than half a century?”

“So it seems.”

“It is incredible.”

“Yet we must believe the log.”

“It is a circumstance without parallel.”

All were agreed to this. It was now proposed to return to the “Ghost.” Nothing more could apparently be gained by remaining aboard the “Paradox.”

Frank decided to keep the log and a few other articles. A small sum of money, less than a hundred pounds, in gold, was found aboard. There might be more, but, if so, it was not easy to find.

Leaving the cabin Frank started for the rail of the ship.

But he had not taken three steps, when he came to a startled halt. There, pinned to the bulwark of the vessel, was a placard.

It was not this alone, but the nature of the wording upon it, which gave Frank a mighty thrill.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Thrilling Discoveries in the Ocean's Depths. —The Fate of the “Nautilus.”—Rescue of Two Survivors.—A Timely Return.

“READ that, will you, Hayden?” cried the young inventor.

The young shipowner had already done so. His face was as white as chalk, for this was what he read :

“To whomsoever shall come aboard the ‘Paradox.’—This ship was visited by the crew of the ship ‘Nautilus,’ derelict, and floating a wreck in the Great Whirlpool. It may be that our fate will be the same as the unhappy crew of the ‘Paradox.’ Heaven forbid! Yet our hearts are sad indeed.

“CAPTAIN PITCHER.”

Here was at last the clue to the mystery of the loss of the “Nautilus.” Frank Reade and Hayden exchanged glances.

“What do you think of it?” asked Frank.

“Heaven be praised!” cried the young shipowner. “We now know that the ‘Nautilus’ is afloat!”

“Yet she is derelict and apt to sink at any time.”

“Not more so, perhaps, than the ‘Paradox.’ We must search the Great Whirlpool until we find her.”

Pomp executed a double-shuffle and stood on his head. Certainly much had been gained by visiting the “Paradox.”

Once more the submarine boat was got under way after cutting loose from the hull of the “Paradox.”

She kept on in the swift current for several days.

In this time no other wreck was seen, nor did any other incident of an exciting sort occur. Frank was desirous of getting as deeply as possible into the heart of the whirlpool, for he believed that it was there that he would find the “Nautilus” if she was yet afloat. Hayden was positive that she was, and would not listen to any other theory. One day a new clue was obtained.

The water suddenly seemed to have become filled with driftwood. There were broken spars, boxes and barrels, and various objects.

Suddenly Barney gave a cry and pointed to a floating object.

“Shure, an’ phwat the deuce do yez call that?”

It was the broken thwart of a boat floating in the current, and upon it was painted plainly the name, “Nautilus.”

“Why, it is a piece of a boat from the ‘Nautilus’!” declared Frank.

Then he paused. Hayden had turned ghastly pale.

"Do you think it possible that the 'Nautilus' has sunk?" he asked, in a whisper.

Frank hesitated.

"I hardly know what answer to make," he declared. "It is quite likely."

Hayden took a turn up and down the deck.

"It would be in this neighbourhood?" he asked, finally.

"I should say so."

"Then—then why not make a search to establish the fact?"

"We shall certainly do so."

Frank stepped into the pilot-house and pressed the button which rang the alarm gong.

Everybody rushed into the cabin. The doors were hermetically shut and the reservoir opened. The boat began rapidly to sink.

Down the "Ghost" went. The depth here seemed very great, and Frank looked at the pressure-gauge with some alarm.

Then the searchlight rays went sent groping through the gloom.

This revealed an astonishing state of affairs. Within a radius of a few hundred yards there were plainly visible the wrecks of three vessels. Each was a dismantled hulk, but whether any one of them was the "Nautilus" it was impossible to say without a close inspection.

"Barney, bring out the diving-suits from the chest in the cabin," called Frank.

"All right, sor!" cried Barney.

As soon as the diving-suits arrived Frank commenced to don one, telling Barney and Pomp to do the same, so as to accompany him on a trip outside.

In a few moments they were ready. Hayden wanted to make one of the party, but Frank wouldn't hear of it. The shipowner and the professor were to stay aboard and look after the "Ghost."

Armed with axes and knives the three divers entered the vestibule. The door leading into the cabin was shut. Then the outer door was opened, and the water rushed in and filled the vestibule.

The three divers walked out and climbed down from the ship's rail. They walked slowly across the intervening distance to one of the hulks.

As Frank drew near to it something seemed to tell him that it was the "Nautilus." The young inventor experienced a thrill. He remembered the instructions of Pinkham, the detective, and wondered if he could find the body of Sam Hall aboard the "Nautilus."

If so, possibly he might recover the deposition of the witness, which was so necessary to save the life of a doomed man in the New York prison. But as he drew nearer to the hulk doubt entered his breast. The vessel was of too old a type to be taken for the "Nautilus."

Indeed, by the electric light on the breast

of his diving-suit he was able to read the name on the bow of the sunken ship: "Vespa-sian," Havana, Cuba.

The young inventor had no desire to explore the hulk, and motioned the same to Barney and Pomp. They now approached another. This seemed to be a vessel of modern architecture, and might possibly be the "Nautilus." Frank drew quite near to it and looked for the name on the bow: "Rose Thorn," Halifax, N.S.

But perhaps the third ship might be identical with it. Frank turned to advance towards it. But as he did so a most astounding thing happened.

A long arm suddenly shot out from the port-hole of the old hulk and encircled him. Quick as a flash, and before Barney and Pomp could act, he was drawn in through the port. Out of sight he went in a twinkling.

Dazed with horror the two servitors stood inactive for a moment. Then they made excited signs to each other. Grasping their axes firmly they started to Frank's rescue.

But at that instant another long arm shot out of another port and encircled Pomp.

In a flash he was also whisked out of sight. Barney was at a loss how to act. He was literally like one petrified.

"Howly shmoke!" he muttered, with a trembling in every joint. "Shure, an' Mither Frank and the naygur are kilt!"

Then a sense of desperation caused him to brandish his axe and start to the rescue of his friends.

Through one of the port-holes he commenced to squeeze his body, and as the electric lights illumined the place he beheld what was really a terrible scene.

The entire hold of the ship seemed to be occupied with the hideous body of some strange sea monster of the character of the giant scuttle-fish.

Seeking a home in the hold of the ship it had evidently lived there and fattened upon victims decoyed into the place until it was like a crab in its shell, quite unable to get out.

Its long arms were about Pomp and Frank, and it was vainly trying to draw them into its capacious maw.

But the divers were making a most determined resistance with their keen axes.

Blow after blow was dealt the long tentacles of the fish, until two of them were severed. Then Barney appeared upon the scene.

With the combined efforts of the three men the cuttle-fish was soon killed. But the water was so filled with blood and the strange fluid exuded by the creature that the divers could hardly see.

With common impulse they now hastened to leave the hulk.

A hasty examination of the remaining wreck showed that they had not yet found the "Nautilus," so they returned to the sub-

marine, and, having given the professor and shipowner a brief account of what had happened, they set the "Ghost" in motion again, and proceeded to move about cautiously from one spot to another.

Frank employed his time testing the currents, while the others kept a sharp look-out.

After spending a day in studying the subject Frank announced his decision.

"I believe that the Great Whirlpool occupies one huge basin many miles in extent, and that the current is caused by a succession of huge submarine rivers, which here unite their waters. There are, I believe, other causes governed by the land and breezes. The land bordering upon the maelstrom is upon one side high and mountainous, catching the winds from two quarters and sending them back over the sea's surface, almost always in one uniform direction, and that in accordance with the mighty current of the maelstrom."

There was certainly logic in Frank's theory. Professor Bookleigh asserted it as his positive belief that it was true.

It was now decided to return to the surface.

It was an early morning hour when the "Ghost" emerged once more into the air. The sea was like glass, and not an object of any kind was in view.

For an entire day the "Ghost" sailed on thus. It was noticed that the further to the east they went the stronger grew the current.

The reason for this Frank divined was that they were rapidly drawing nearer to the main centre, or vortex of the revolving body of water. This was undoubtedly true, but as darkness came on once more, the sky began to assume a peculiar leaden hue.

Everybody watched it with curiosity.

"What do you make of it, Frank?" asked Hayden, anxiously.

"Well," replied the young inventor, "it is my candid opinion that it indicates a storm."

"Whew! it will be a regular tempest."

"I fear so."

"If the 'Nautilus' is derelict it may carry her down!"

"It is possible."

Hayden anxiously searched the horizon.

"Oh, if she would only come in sight now!" he muttered, "what a happy thing it would be!"

It was Pomp's first watch that night. Hayden could not sleep, and so he remained on deck with the negro until a late hour.

Ever and anon he scoured the sea as best he could by the light of the electric searchlight and a night-glass.

Hours passed, and finally Barney came on duty. Still Hayden would not retire.

"Something tells me," he declared, "that the 'Nautilus' will come within the range of our vision to-night."

"Begorra, I hope that same," declared Barney, earnestly, "if only fer yez own sake, me good sor."

"Thank you, Barney," replied Hayden.

Then he sprang to his feet with an excited cry:

"Ah!" he shouted, "do you see that star of light yonder? See—see! It is a ship's lantern, as I live!"

Sure enough, far away in the distant gloom there was a mere speck of light. It was too dull to be a star, and was hardly discernible. It must have been a great distance from the "Ghost."

"Look!" cried Hayden, excitedly. "Can you not see it, Barney? It is a ship's lantern. I tell you it is on board the 'Nautilus.' I knew we should come up with her to-night."

"Shure, sor, be aisy," remonstrated Barney, "an' if ye can't be aisy, be as aisy as ye kin."

But Hayden had already sprung to the searchlight, and he quickly turned it in the direction of the distant light.

Across the sea, even to the horizon line, shot the brilliant pathway of dazzling light.

Then Hayden placed his powerful night-glass to his eyes.

He could see the light no longer, for the electric glare killed it; but low on the sea-line he saw a black object.

It was hardly visible, but yet it was there, and he felt sure that it was the "Nautilus."

"Sound the alarm, Barney!" he cried; "bring everybody on deck. We must take action at once."

Hayden cast a fearful gaze above.

The sky was black and cloud-hung, and in the distance sounded a rumbling of thunder.

Barney sounded the gong, and in a few moments everybody was on deck. Matters were quickly explained, and the "Ghost" was at once put under full speed.

Everybody was upon the qui vive, and each moment the distant ship drew nearer to view. Now her hull could be plainly seen in outline against the sky beyond. Soon even her stumps of masts could be distinguished.

The searchlight revealed all this. Hayden walked the deck excitedly.

"We must overtake her!" he cried. "If the storm comes she will go down!"

Overhead the dull thunder was booming, there was a southing wind which played ceaselessly across the bosom of the tossing sea.

On, faster and faster, went the "Ghost." She gained every moment upon the floating hulk.

Now there seemed to be no doubt that she was the "Nautilus." Sailors were seen upon her deck. One of them leaned over the rail and shouted through a speaking-trumpet:

"Ahoy! What craft is that?"

The words, seeming a thousand miles away, reached the hearing of those on the deck of the "Ghost."

Then Frank Reade replied:

"This is the 'Ghost,' submarine boat, Frank Reade, master. Who are you?"

There was a moment's lull in the wind, then the reply came back:

"This is the ship 'Nautilus,' from New York, Captain Pitcher."

The excitement created by this reply can hardly be expressed in words. Hayden fairly danced with joy.

"Run alongside, Frank," he cried. "Get them off as quickly as possible."

This Frank intended to do; but at that moment there came a terrific gust of wind.

The "Nautilus" heeled over, a mountainous wave hurled the two vessels apart, then the storm burst in all its fury.

It was with the utmost difficulty that the crew of the "Ghost" got back to the cabin. The "Ghost" seemed standing on end.

Water rushed over her in tons, and she would surely have been swamped had it not been for Barney promptly closing the hermetically-sealed doors.

But it was impossible to penetrate the storm with the searchlight, or even tell where they were. All that could be done was to hold on and keep the "Ghost" from becoming a hopeless wreck.

Frank would have gone to the bottom with her but for his fears that some of the crew of the "Nautilus" might be washed overboard and need to be picked up.

Hayden was frantic. He was positive that the "Nautilus" was lost.

"She will founder, I tell you!" he declared. "She can never outride this storm!"

However, she could be given no possible relief. All that the crew of the "Ghost" could do was to look out for themselves and trust to fortune.

The storm raged with terrible fury, and it seemed as if the floodgates of heaven were opened. Blinding rain literally filled the air in a sheet of water, and the waves ran mountains high. But the "Ghost," unhampered by rigging, rode upon them like a duck.

It could not be even guessed what was the fate of the "Nautilus." It was feared by all that she would certainly founder, and, indeed, there was good reason for this. Ever and anon across the inky blackness of the night there would shoot a lightning flash, positively dazzling in its brilliancy.

But the storm could not last for ever.

After some hours of duration the sky began to clear, the rain ceased falling, the wind subsided, and the waves rolled only in long, regular billows.

The cabin doors were now opened and all came out on deck. The searchlight's glare again went out across the tossing waters.

But no twinkling star of light was seen. No ship's hull was on the broad waste. It seemed that the storm must have separated the two vessels by a wide distance.

Hayden was frantic.

"I tell you we have lost her!" he declared. "She is at the bottom of the sea, and all those valuable lives are lost."

"Well, if she is at the bottom of the sea," declared Frank Reade, resolutely, "or anywhere adrift upon its surface, we will surely find her."

"What good will it do if she is at the bottom of the sea and her crew dead?" asked Hayden.

"It will do some good," maintained Frank. "We shall find the documents necessary to clear Charles Haynes."

"You are right. That will certainly pay for the effort."

This seemed to calm Hayden greatly. He said little more upon the subject, but continued to watch the sea.

It seemed a long while before daylight finally came. But when it once more dispelled the darkness and the sea subsided to almost a dead calm everybody felt better. The "Ghost" now ploughed along at a rapid speed. Suddenly Hayden gave a sharp cry.

"What is the matter?" asked Frank, rushing to his side.

"Look over there!"

Hayden proffered him the glass. Frank took it, and for a while studied a small object out upon the wide smooth waste.

"What do you make of it?" asked the shipowner, after a moment.

"I can hardly say," said Frank, slowly. "Yet it looks to me like a man clinging to a drifting spar."

"Ah! that's what I thought it was."

The boat was headed for the distant object. As they drew nearer it became almost a dead certainty that it was a man clinging to a spar. He seemed nearly exhausted, but appeared to gain strength, and waved his arms at sight of the "Ghost."

Swiftly the submarine boat drew down upon the castaway. He was seen to be a common sailor, though the storm had nearly deprived him of his clothes.

The "Ghost" glided near enough for Barney to throw him a rope. He grasped it, and was quickly drawn aboard. As he came over the rail, dripping wet, he sank down upon the deck, exhausted. A drop of brandy, however, quickly revived him.

"Well, my man, now can you give an account of yourself?" asked Frank, when the poor fellow had recovered a little.

"All honour to ye, sir!" he replied, tugging his forelock sailor-fashion. "My name is Jamie Brown, and I'm able seaman aboard the 'Nautilus.'"

"Sure enough," cried Hayden. "your name is on our pay rolls. Say, my fellow, can you tell us of the 'Nautilus'?"

The sailor passed a hand across his brow.

"I make free to say that she is safe an' slick in Davy Jones's Locker afore now."

"Then she has gone down?"

"She was broached to an' fillin', when a big wave took me over," replied Brown.

Hayden groaned.

"Then, of course, she is at the bottom of the sea!" he declared.

"And the evidence necessary to clear Charles Haynes has gone with her," said Frank.

Brown was closely catechised in regard to the Scotland Yard detective, Sam Hall. He remembered the detective well and described him fully; but he could not say what his fate had been.

"I reckon he's along with the others at the bottom," he declared.

It was estimated that Brown had drifted and had been blown by the wind and current some twenty miles during the time he had been in the water.

The ship had doubtless gone down at about the time he was washed overboard. Therefore it was safe enough to reckon that the ship could be found by returning twenty or more miles.

The "Ghost" was turned against the powerful current and full power turned on. It was slow progress, for it was only gradually that the little craft overcame the tremendous resistance.

She covered the distance in something less than six hours. Then Frank took his bearings carefully, and then the reservoir was opened and the "Ghost" began to sink.

Eight, ten, twenty, fifty fathoms the indicator registered. In one hundred and forty fathoms the submarine boat touched bottom.

Then the searchlight's rays were sent everywhere over the bed of the sea.

The scene was not unlike that of many another locality they had visited. There were beds of shifting sand, kelp-strewn rocks and reefs, fishes of various kinds, and other strange sights.

But there was no sign of a wreck. Vainly the searchlight's rays were sent into every corner.

Not a vestige of the "Nautilus" could be seen. But Frank Reade was not discouraged. He had by no means hoped for such good luck as to stumble upon the wreck at once.

He expected a long search and was prepared for it. The "Ghost" now began to grope its way about the ocean bed. Being elevated a few feet it could easily travel about so long as a careful watch was kept for obstructions.

Some time was thus spent in covering several miles. Then suddenly Frank Reade, who was in the pilot-house, gave a loud cry of excitement.

"As I live," he shouted, "I believe I can see the wreck of the 'Nautilus' this moment!"

As he spoke he pointed away through the water to the end of the searchlight's rays.

Certainly the hull of a ship could be seen resting in a bank of sand. It might not be the "Nautilus." Many a rotten hulk lay under the maelstrom's current.

But Frank clung to the hope that it was the object of their quest, while Hayden felt confident.

The "Ghost" was sent forward at rapid speed. The distance was soon covered, and as they drew near it was seen beyond all doubt that the wreck was that of the "Nautilus."

A portion of her side was stove in, and she had parted seams fore and aft. No doubt she had sunk suddenly.

The "Ghost" was brought to a stop twenty feet from the wreck.

The electric lights sent a flood of radiance over the ship, making all as plain as day. All was excitement aboard the "Ghost." Frank decided to allow Hayden to accompany him this time, while Pomp and Barney remained with the professor.

"If possible we must find the body of Hall, the detective," said Frank, as he fastened his helmet and prepared to lead the way out on to the ocean bed.

Everything upon the ship's deck presented a scene of general desolation. Destruction had laid its hand heavily upon rigging and woodwork. Planks were rent and torn up, and there were great seams in the bulwarks of the once staunch ship.

The two divers approached the entrance to the cabin. To the mainmast two of the crew were lashed. They were ordinary seamen, and the expression upon their faces showed that they had died in great agony.

They were the only human beings to be found on the deck. That there were others in the cabin there was little doubt, for the hatches were tightly battened, and it required some labour on the part of the two divers to lift them.

This was finally done, however, and down the cabin stairs they made their way.

The electric lights on their diving-suits dispelled the gloom of the place, but both experienced a shock of horror as they entered the cabin.

From a corner there suddenly shot forth a nearly naked human form, its arms extended, stiff and rigid in death.

The moving of the currents brought the corpse up until it came in contact with the divers. The terrible ghastly sight, the corpse's bloated face, hideous, straining eyeballs, all made a scene of horror calculated to daunt the bravest of men.

Then through the water floated other corpses. They approached from every direction, even through the open door of the cabin.

After the first chill had worn off the two divers became cooler, and went about their duties calmly, looking at each body that remained in the cabin in the hope of finding the Scotland Yard detective.

Satisfied that the man's body was not there Frank went into the next cabin and proceeded onwards, until every part of the ship had been closely inspected.

But there was only one verdict to accept.

This was that Sam Hall had not been below decks, nor Captain Pitcher either. Neither could be found aboard the ship. It was a mystery.

It was easy enough to understand that Captain Pitcher had been on deck and had been washed away. But the detective would more likely have sought refuge in the cabin.

"They must have been on deck and been washed into the sea," said Frank to Hayden, in the deaf-and-dumb motions.

"Very likely," was the response.

"In that case they will not be easily found."

This was true. The two divers were dismayed. To look for a sunken wreck was one thing; but to find the body of a drowned man in all that vast expanse of ocean bed was quite another.

It looked as if Charles Haynes must hang.

Again the two divers went over the ship; but again their efforts were futile. Hayden secured the money from the safe and the valuable papers in the captain's room.

They had occupied some time in all this. The pressure was beginning to tell upon Hayden's brain, and it was necessary to return shortly to the "Ghost." Accordingly both left the wreck and went back to the submarine boat. Clambering aboard they went into the vestibule.

The door was closed, the pneumatic pumps applied, and very soon they were in the cabin.

Removing their helmets they told the others of the failure of their search. After which Frank sent the submarine along once more, while everyone kept a sharp lookout in the hope that they might by good luck stumble upon the body of Sam Hall.

Suddenly, while they were groping their way through a small valley, Hayden, who was forward in the turret, gave a loud cry.

"Look out!" he yelled. "We are lost!"

"What's the matter?" shouted Frank Reade.

"The sea serpent!" was the terrified reply.

Then all in the submarine boat saw the cause of the alarm. Down a slope there came gliding a long, sinuous form. At a distance even, it was tremendous in proportions, its length seemingly fully a hundred feet. It seemed to be making straight for the "Ghost."

A wail went up from the rescued sailor Brown.

"The sea serpent, by jingo!" he yelled. "It's all up with us!"

"Heavens!" gasped Hayden, with cold perspiration oozing from every pore. "What a monster!"

"Golly fo' glory!" yelled Pomp. "Dis

chile don' wan' no paht ob snakes. Jes' go fo' de surface, Marse Frank, as quick as eber yo' can."

"Begorra, it's kilt we'll all be!" screamed Barney.

Professor Bookleigh only shrugged his shoulders and regarded the monster intently.

"If that is really the sea serpent," he muttered, "then the great mystery which has so long baffled science is solved."

But Frank Reade brought the "Ghost" to a stop.

"Don't get excited," he said, coolly. "Nobody will get hurt. I'll fix that chap pretty quick."

Frank had seen quickly enough that it was no snake whatever. Indeed, it was only a giant eel of a species which live only at great depth in the ocean, and rarely come to the surface.

Those well informed on the subject connect the fabled sea serpent with a specimen of this deep-sea monster.

The eel's sinuous folds glided down the slope. Then suddenly it paused. Its broad head, with its wide mouth bristling with fine teeth, was raised high in the water, and it seemed to be studying the "Ghost" intently.

For a few moments it remained in this position, then it moved, and seemed to hover for a moment over an object in the sand.

Then the voyagers were rewarded with a thrilling sight. Down went the eel's jaws, and when it uplifted its head it was seen to hold an object in them.

"Heavens! Do you see that?"

"What is it?"

"It—is—I tell you it is a man!"

Certainly it was the corpse of a human being which the eel held in its capacious jaws. One moment it held the dead man aloft. Then, with a gulping motion, the body disappeared entirely down the monster's throat. After swallowing it, it buried its head in the sand and remained motionless.

This was probably the method it employed of digestion.

For some moments the witnesses of this scene stood transfixed with horror. Then Hayden turned a livid face to Frank.

"Did you see that?" he groaned. "Upon my word, I believe that was either Pitcher or Hall."

"It may be so."

That they should conclude that this was the case seemed a very reasonable hypothesis. But Hayden was not satisfied.

"If that is Hall," he said, "why can we not recover the body?"

Frank looked surprised.

"The eel has swallowed it," he said.

"True, but he has not mutilated or digested it."

"No."

"Then why not recover the body?"

"You mean to kill the eel and cut it open?"



"Yes."

Frank studied the monster's position a moment. Then he seemed to receive an inspiration.

"I have an idea!" he cried. "On the whole you are right, Hayden. We must kill the eel."

He caused the "Ghost" to draw back a distance of a hundred yards from the eel. Then he procured three heavy and very sharp axes.

"Barney and Pomp," he said, "I am going out there to try to kill the eel. If you want to go with me you may. It will be a dangerous undertaking, and may cost us our lives. You have the choice."

Only one moment did the two servitors hesitate. Both were intensely afraid of the reptile tribe. To them the eel was the equivalent of a huge snake; but the coveted opportunity to go with their master upon an undertaking, no matter how hazardous, prevailed.

"Begorra! I'm wid yez to the death, Misther Frank."

"I am jes' gwine wif yo' an' no mistake, Marse Frank."

In vain Hayden pleaded for permission to go. If he had gone, one of the others would have been obliged to stay behind. Frank preferred to have his two faithful servitors with him. The professor advanced and laid a hand on Frank's arm.

"Mr. Reade," he said. "Science demands that you recover at least the skull, if not the entire skeleton, of that monster."

"You shall have the skull," replied Frank, earnestly.

In a few moments the three adventurers had donned the diving-armour.

Then, armed with axes, they left the "Ghost." To attack a monster eel fully one hundred feet in length in one hundred and forty fathoms' depth of water was by no means a light undertaking.

But the habit the eel had of burying its head in the sand to aid digestion seemed to favour them.

It would enable them to approach the monster unseen. Then perhaps a lucky blow upon the neck might break the spinal column and kill the monster.

Those on board the "Ghost" watched Frank, Barney, and Pomp intently. Nearer and nearer the three divers drew to the eel.

He evidently did not note their approach. If he did, he did not pay any special heed to it. Now they stood over the monster.

The narrow part of its body near the head was the point Frank desired to strike.

He motioned to Barney and Pomp. All raised their axes. There was a moment of hesitation. Then down they came. Twice they rose and fell, each time being buried to the shoulder in the monster's hard flesh.

The effect was thrilling. Up from the sand came the eel's head with the first blow. But it quickly fell.

The second blow had certainly cut the vertebral column. The head fell, but the huge body rose in terrible contortions.

A huge wave lifted the three assailants from their feet, and they were hurled with frightful force against a reef.

Here, however, they clung desperately, while the terrific commotion in the water threatened to kill them with the force of the concussion against their helmets.

Luckily for them the loss of blood soon robbed the monster of all strength, and in great coils it lay in a death stupor.

All three now rushed forward and cut the eel's head completely off, Barney carrying it to the "Ghost's" deck for preservation.

Frank now produced a sharp knife and proceeded to dissect the eel. This was no easy task. Its flesh was extremely hard, and its skin very tough. However, after some effort he managed to rip open a part of its throat, and soon had reached the apex of the stomach.

As the body fell out upon the sand he hastily surveyed it, and experienced a thrill of disappointment most keen.

It was that of a middle-aged man, tall and strongly built, an ordinary seaman without a doubt.

That the man was one of the crew of the "Nautilus" there was no doubt. Frank motioned to Barney and Pomp, and the return to the deck of the "Ghost" was made. No sooner had they passed through the vestibule than those in the cabin surrounded them. Frank removed his helmet.

"No," he said, in answer to Hayden's questioning gaze, "it is neither of them."

Hayden was plainly disappointed.

"You don't mean it!" he exclaimed. "Well, that is too bad! What shall we do?"

"Continue the search."

"It is useless, and I think we had better return home."

It was plain that Hayden had given up all hope. But the quest was pursued for several days longer.

Then it was unanimously agreed that all

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had been done that was possible. There was no other way but to return home.

So the "Ghost" rose to the surface and began the long battle with the current of the maelstrom. Several times the crew almost gave up in despair in their efforts to get out of the current. Even while they were yet in it a startling incident occurred. Hayden still spent hours searching the sea with a glass.

One day he saw an object far to windward.

"I tell you, Frank," he declared, "it is a mass of wreckage, and there are two men upon it."

At once the "Ghost" was headed for the distant object.

"Heaven be praised!" Hayden shouted a little later. "It is Pitcher and Hall!"

Ten minutes later the two survivors of the "Nautilus" were safely aboard.

Their explanation was simple. Washed overboard, they had clung to this mass of wreckage for days without food or drink.

Drifting thus in the maelstrom their fate had seemed sealed, but, hoping against fate, they had bravely clung there.

For days the brave little "Ghost" fought with the powerful current.

Then the outer circle was passed, and once more the open sea was reached. Six weeks they had passed in the Great Whirlpool. Safely they arrived home at last, Detective Hall getting to New York just in time to save Charles Haynes from the scaffold.

THE END.

## A Word from Your Editor

HERE we are in our new coat, and swollen with pride at our tremendous importance. For lo! we have made a big stride since last we appeared before our readers, and we are conceited enough to think that the big stride is a jolly good stride as well.

No longer are we grovelling in the shades of the halfpenny market; we are in the penny bunch now, and who can say we are not worth a penny with our coloured cover and our increase of size to thirty-two pages of reading matter in addition to that cover?

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### It's Up To You.

And now that we have done our part, it's up to you, our friends, to make the venture a success. We can guarantee the quality of the stories of dashing Frank Reade and his wonderful inventions, we can see that the covers are good, and make sure, also, that the newsagents stock them.

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